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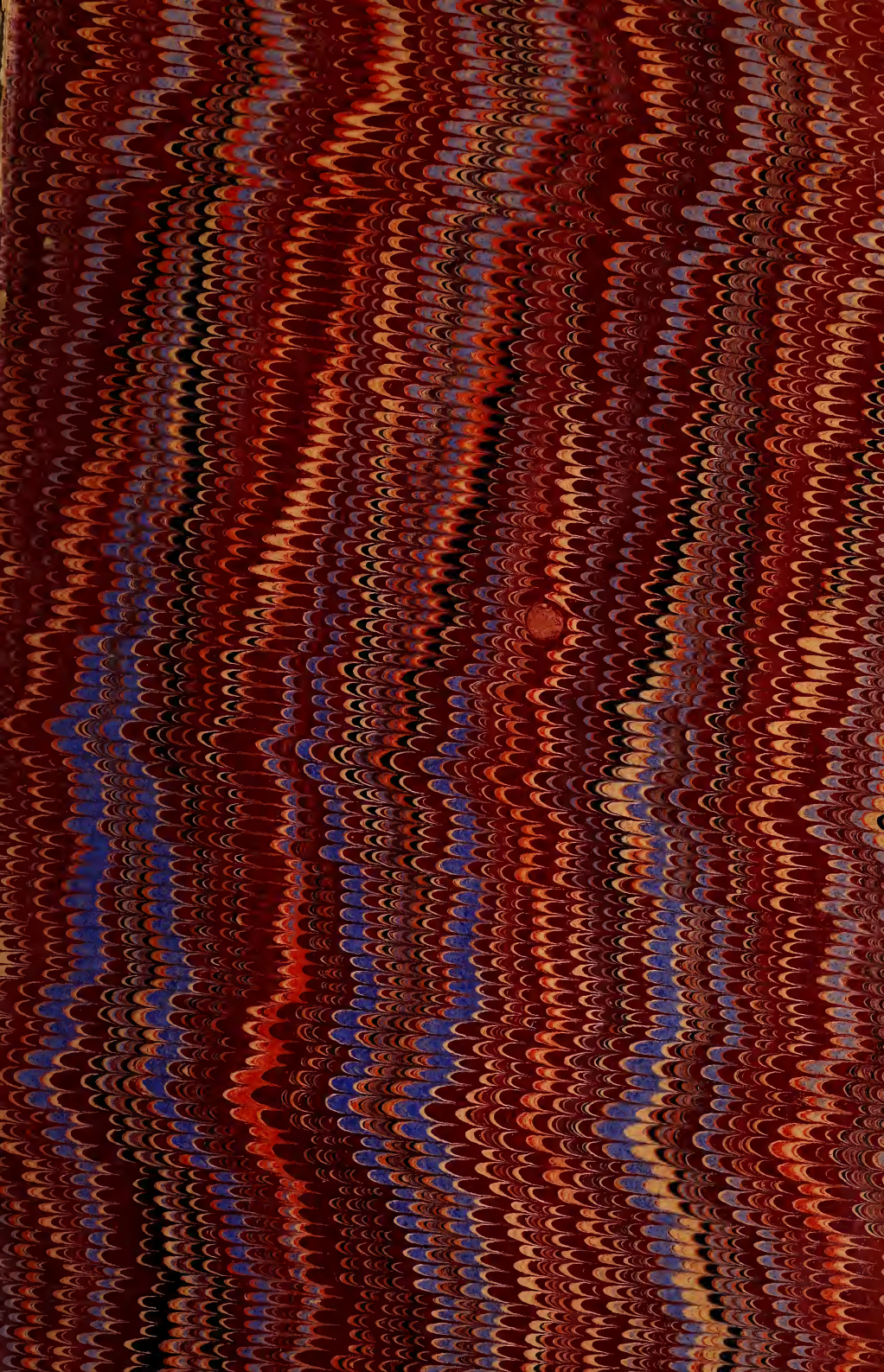
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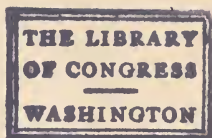
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



LECTURES

ON



The Heidelberg Catechism,

BY THE

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THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

FROM QUESTION 43 TO QUESTION 85.

Q. 43.

The word *further* presupposes the doctrine of the atonement as set forth in the preceding answers, beginning with Question 37.

These answers present the objective virtue of the Lord's death. Why was it necessary that Jesus should die on the *Cross*? What is the value and the virtue of His death in relation to God and to sinful mankind? Under these aspects the six preceding questions discuss the subject. Here we pass from the objective to the subjective value of Christ's death. The question is: What benefit do I, a believer, an individual member of Christ, actually receive from this sacrifice. The answer is "that by His power the old man is crucified, slain and buried, so that the evil lusts of the flesh may no more reign in us."

The answer resolves itself into two parts. The first is a direct answer to the question.

The benefit that believers receive is "that the old man" is destroyed. The other part of the answer describes the purpose which the destruction of the old man conditions. The purpose is two-fold; on the one side it is negative. The lusts of the flesh shall not reign in us. On the other side the purpose is positive. We offer ourselves to Christ a living sacrifice of thankfulness.

1. Note the fact that as the Catechism lays stress on the death of Christ *on the cross*, so do all the confessions of the Reformation period. Why? The antithesis is the unbloody sacrifice of the body of Christ upon the altar in the Roman Catholic Church. This is always implied by the emphasis put by the Catechism on Christ dying on the cross.

2. The benefit individual believers receive from Christ's sacrifice is that, our own "old man is slain." The old man

is the fallen, sinful nature, which by natural birth we inherit. It is the expression used by Paul in Rom. 6:6. Also in Coll. 3:9, in opposition to the new man, which is the regenerate nature of those who believe in Christ.

The old man is crucified, slain and buried. These three terms are used to express the utter destruction of sinful, corrupt human nature.

3. Two things are to be noted that condition the utter destruction of the old man. The first is 'His power.' Whose power? The power of the self-sacrificing, dying Christ. In His death, rightly considered, there is a virtue triumphant over sin. By rightly considered, I mean the negative and positive forces of his death. It is this singular, sin-destroying virtue realized in the power of Jesus dying for the world, which is the only virtue by which our sinful nature can be annulled.

The other condition is the fact, expressed by the words "with Him." The 'old man' in us is not slain by Christ's power externally exerted, or brought to bear upon us in the Bible or by words, however important that influence may be; but we share Christ's sin-destroying virtue by union with Him in faith. He appropriates us by His Holy Spirit; we appropriate Him by faith.

Says Paul, "I am crucified with Christ." Again, "therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death."

When through faith Christ and we are one, He has what is of us and our own, and we have what is of Him and His own. He is the perfect, righteous One bearing my sins, and I share the full virtue of His righteousness and propitiation.

4. The end effected by union with Christ and His power, under its negative aspect, is that the evil lusts of the flesh may no more reign in us. "*Lust*" *epithumia*, namely, desires, impulses, propensities, springing from perverted human nature; some predominantly physical, others spiritual; but all growing forth from the false principle in us, which we call sin. The Catechism says "evil lusts." The word *evil* expresses the moral character of lusts. Can we speak of spiritual lusts? Yes. What are they? False desires, false propensities in the spiritual sphere which, on the one hand evince themselves by antagonism to God and Jesus Christ; and on the other hand by refined iniquity. These lusts reign in unregenerate man. The only power by which this reign may be broken is that which lies in vital union

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with Christ. Why? Because He is the only man among men who in our human nature overcame these lusts.

5. Under its positive aspect the benefit is that we may offer ourselves to Christ a sacrifice of thankfulness. Compare Rom. 12: 1, 2. This is the only condition on which victory over sin depends. These two aspects are to be considered together. The positive conditions the negative; though we have the opposite order in the answer. In the degree in which I of my own free will offer myself actually to Jesus Christ, am I overcoming the evil lusts of the flesh. It is, however, to be noted that the two mutually condition each other. He who allows lusts to reign over him in any degree does not in the right sense offer himself to Christ.

6. The answer is valid as representing the beginning of Christian life; in other words, the old man is utterly destroyed in principle. The beginning of the destruction is the *new birth*; but the destruction is not ultimate. The destruction advances only in the degree in which the regenerate life is vital and growing. In the degree that the regenerate life approaches perfect holiness, will the old man be utterly destroyed, using the word perfect in its broadest New Testament sense. That perfection will be attained at the second coming of Christ, when the whole man, body, soul and spirit, the Church universal, shall attain to the possession of the glory of the Lord. In the final sense, the old man as set forth in Scripture will be utterly overcome only in the end.

It is no reflection on Christianity that a faithful Christian is imperfect. No reflection that a saint a century old has occasion to make confession of shortcomings and asks renewed communications of grace.

Q. 44.

In the New Testament we have two words denoting the future condition of the dead, as distinct from the final glory of heaven. The one is Hades, the other Gehenna.

Gehenna, or Ge Hinnom is the name of the valley where the refuse of Jerusalem was burned. The fire being kept up day and night, it became the image of the finally lost. Hades is derived from two Greek words, *há* and *ιδέειν*. Hades, etymologically, means in the New Testament the future,

unseen world as distinguished from the world visible to the bodily eye. It is a very innocent word. The Creed teaches that by His crucifixion and death Jesus passed into the unseen world, called by the ancients under-world. This word presupposes their conceptions of astronomy and geology. The earth was a plane; beneath this plane were unfathomed depths into which the dead departed.

The form of the conception is like that of the Hebrews; and is similar to the Tartarus of the Greeks.

The answer of the Catechism is an interpretation which differs from the accepted meaning of this article as prevalent when the Apostles' Creed was in process of formation. This answer is due to Calvin: he introduced the explanation of *hades* as given in this answer; doubtless his chief motive was to get rid of the doctrine of Purgatory. To admit the descent of Jesus into the under world seemed to him and to the authors of the Catechism to involve complications with the Roman doctrine of purification and suffering in the world to come.

The interpretation of the *descensus* as here given was never accepted by all branches of the Reformed Church. Time and theological thought have in a measure surmounted Calvin's difficulty. A very large proportion of the Reformed churches in Germany, France and other countries on the Continent, especially theologians, concede that the *descensus* has a meaning other than that given by this answer. In this regard the Lutheran Church of the sixteenth century, even Melancthon and his school, came under the influence of Calvin.

Do not infer from these statements that I question the truth of the answer. The answer teaches truth. But the meaning is not an answer to the Question, not a legitimate exposition of *hades*. I presume a large majority of Reformed ministers, in the ranks of the older as well as of younger men, both German and English, would concur in the statement.

The substance of this answer is the equivalent, somewhat intensified, of the answers previously given. It is not requisite, therefore, to enter specially into verbal exposition. One thing only I note. Says the Catechism, "He suffered in His soul on the cross, and before." It emphasizes the mental and moral force of the curse which lay upon Jesus. The word *cross* brings to view prominently His bodily pain.

Observe a singular thing regarding this fundamental fact of Christianity. Our Catechism does not ask as it commonly does touching other articles: What dost thou understand by the Resurrection of Christ?

But waving what is primary, it passes on to inquire what benefit we receive? The Answer is three-fold. First, "by His resurrection He has overcome death, that He might make us partakers of the righteousness which by His death He has obtained for us."

The second part sets forth the benefit believers receive: "We are also now by His power raised up to a new life."

The third part emphasises Christ's resurrection as the "pledge of our resurrection."

1. By His resurrection Christ has overcome death; death is inwardly connected with sin. Sin is the principle, the seed, from which grows forth or is produced that abnormal epoch we call "Death."

Death is a point in the process of human history. A turning point at which sinful man passes from the present earthly period into the post-earthly, unseen period of his existence.

Death, therefore, is a realm. The entire period of man's existence beyond his earthly state (because through sin it is abnormal and false), bears the same name, *death*. Christ overcame death. He and no other. He the First and the Last. He overcame it inasmuch as in His person and life, though born of woman, born under the law, He abolished the principle of sin. He wrought out sinlessness in His personal history on a positive ground; that is, inasmuch as in His person and life He fulfilled the law of love, thus realizing in Himself the ideal of manhood.

2. The Catechism subordinates the Resurrection to His death on the cross. The purpose of the Resurrection was "that He might make us partakers of the Righteousness which by His death He has obtained for us."

According to this view the Resurrection derives significance from this that the end of Christ's death might be attained. The New Testament, however, assigns the Resurrection a coördinate place. It would be better to subordinate Death to the Resurrection, for we are not saved by the crucified Christ as crucified. We are saved by the crucified Christ risen from the dead. "If Christ be not

risen," says Paul, "you are yet in your sins." "Then they also who are fallen asleep in Him are perished." 1 Cor. 15.

The Resurrection is the corner-stone of Christianity. The cross certainly is central in Redemption; but there is no virtue in the cross apart from the new life, achieved by the complete victory, internally and externally, over the whole realm of sin.

3. "We now by His power are raised up to a new life." *We* denotes the members of Christ. Compare Catechism, question 32.

His members live in Him. He lives in them. They and He possess the same life. This is expressed by the words, "Raised up to a new life." Compare Coll. 3: 1. Rom. 6: 4.

The new life is the resurrection life of Christ, not His sinless life as He lived it under the law, but His sinless, holy life, perfected, consummated by the complete triumph in His resurrection over sin. Joined to Him in His death, we revive, we rise with Him in the image of His resurrection. Says the Catechism, "by His power." What power? The Resurrection power; not the virtue of the cross separately considered, but the virtue of the cross in its conquest over sin. Our Resurrection with Christ takes place now. We also are "now" raised up. A man regenerate by the Holy Ghost is inserted into Christ. I am planted into Him, to use the figure of Paul: Grafted into Him. The point of the beginning of the new life, of the regenerate, is the point of the beginning of the resurrection life. Not at the end of the world do I attain it. I have attained it now by my membership in Christ. This is undoubtedly the teaching of the New Testament, the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles, especially Paul. Every word in this part of the Answer is *true*.

4. The Resurrection of Christ is "to us a sure pledge of our Resurrection." The word 'pledge' may be taken externally. It may mean: this historic fact, that Christ rose from the dead, assures me that my Resurrection will also become a fact. As certain as the first is real so certain will the second be real. There is propriety in this aspect of meaning; but if we accept the word 'pledge' we have to emphasize its internal significance. Christ by union with me is the ground of my Resurrection; living in Him and having by my membership in Him the real beginning of

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the Resurrection, it cannot be otherwise than that in due course of time the ultimate fruit of my union with Him will also be realized.

Remark: 1. The structure of this Answer makes the impression that our Resurrection refers mainly to the body; certainly saints will rise in the body, but it is a mistake to emphasize the body by itself or separately from the soul. The new life embraces the whole man; the Resurrection of the saints also embraces entire manhood. The believer in the wholeness of his new existence, that is, in soul and body, will attain to perfection; and that perfection implies the triumph of the whole man over the realm of sin and all its consequences.

2. It has been said that the Resurrection is past. There is an element of truth in this sentiment. It is past in the sense that I have begun to live the resurrection life in Christ. The resurrection life is now in process of growth. But in so far as the sentiment presumes to deny the Resurrection of the whole man, the body no less than the soul, at the second coming of Christ, it is utterly anti-Christian.

Q. 46.

The Ascension implies an essential difference between heaven and earth. It also implies a change, a transformation, in the personal history of Jesus Christ. The Ascension has an exterior side. Christ was taken up in sight of His disciples; they saw Him ascend. The ascension has an interior side which is hidden from the bodily eye. A true conception of the Ascension implies both sides of the mystery. The Ascension is recorded by Luke 24: 51; Acts 1: 9. It is not recorded by Matthew or John; it is found in Mark 16: 19. But as the genuineness of that passage has been in dispute during the whole history of the Church, I do not lay stress on it.

1. The ascension was an external visible transaction. It is a historic fact, a real thing, as truly as His Resurrection or His Crucifixion. On its external reality, the Catechism, like the New Testament, lays stress; it is important that preachers and catechists lay stress on it as a historic fact. Let not the truth that its significance turns on its interior side, divert your mind from the necessity of the fact as externally real.

2. Heaven is to be taken in its proper and eternal significance. It does not mean some distant locality in the sidereal heavens. It does not mean Paradise taken in the sense of felicity and blessedness. Heaven here means the divine realm, the eternal glory in the bosom of which the triune God lives. Heaven is eternal as God is eternal. Into this eternal realm of glory the God-man enters.

3. Emphasis is to be put on the manhood of Jesus, on His manhood in union with Deity; but no special emphasis on Deity.

The mystery of the Ascension and its inexpressible significance for the Church, turns on this that Jesus the Son of Mary, in all points a man as we, sin excepted, in organic union with the Son of God entered into the divine realm. That is the demonstration of Christian immortality, or better a demonstration of eternal life, a positive, unchangeable communion of love with God, in the person of His Son. Accordingly we emphasize the broad difference between Heaven and Earth.

4. In Heaven the God-man continues in our behalf. Heb. 7:25. There He as the risen, living One, as Head of His Church, is reigning, interceding in our interest, for our progress in fellowship and for our ultimate victory.

5. The present relative position of the Mediator in Heaven will cease at the final consummation. He will eternally be the living medium of communion between the God-head and the Church triumphant. But a change in His relative position is plainly taught in the Scriptures. Of that change, however, it is difficult to speak in definite terms. Says Paul, 1 Cor. 15:24: "Then cometh the end, that is the perfection of the Resurrection, when He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father." The same truth is expressed somewhat more definitely in verse 28: "When all things have been subjected to Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all."

For this reason the Catechism says: "Continues there until He shall come again to judge the living and the dead." The entire New Testament looks forward to the Second Advent as the final epoch of Messianic History, as the perfection of the new life and of the redemption from sin and the kingdom of darkness.

Remark: The pulpit fails to preach the whole gospel by fixing attention almost exclusively on past events in Messianic History.

Q. 46.

Past events are fundamental, I may say, infinitely important, but their full significance they derive from their organic connection with that glory that shall be revealed to us when the kingdom of God itself will attain to perfection. Christian people lose in healthy enthusiasm and uplifting inspiration for lack of due emphasis on this aspect of Christianity.

Qs. 47 AND 48.

I shall consider question 47 in connection with question 48. The two revolve around one issue. They touch the apple of discord between the Lutherans and Reformed in the sixteenth century. The controversy was complicated, and conducted with much excited feeling. I shall touch only a few salient points.

Question 47 asks: Is not then Christ with us even unto the end of the world?

This inquiry arises from the fact that Christ in sight of His disciples had ascended up to Heaven. In that age Heaven and earth were conceived as locally distant and separated; not only distant but so widely different as to constitution that they excluded each other. If Jesus was in Heaven He was not on earth, though He promised to be with His people continually. Reformed theologians were not able to predicate this presence of His humanity; therefore in the Answer it is said, "according to His human nature, He is now not on earth." Lutherans asserted the contrary. According to His human nature He is truly and really on earth; hence the controversy.

1. Lutherans and Reformed maintained that Christ was true man and true God. In this regard there was no difference. The Reformed desired to protect the integrity of the human nature, and therefore emphasized its finitude. If in Heaven, immeasurably distant from earth, then the humanity could not truly be on earth.

2. Lutherans laid chief stress on the presence of Christ's humanity with His Church. This sprang from the Lutheran doctrine on the Lord's Supper.

The Lutherans affirmed the real presence of the whole Christ in this sacramental transaction; not the presence of

Christ as God only, but the presence of Christ as man. To this end Lutheran theologians held what was called "*Communicatio idiomatum*," the communication of the divine attributes to the humanity of Christ.

3. The Reformed also held and taught communion with Christ's humanity in the Lord's Supper. Calvin met the difficulty by teaching that by the power of the Holy Ghost the believer was, as it were, lifted up. The connection and the fellowship of the believer with Christ's humanity in the Supper was brought about not by the presence of His humanity in the sacramental transaction, but by this wonderful act by which the believer on earth has fellowship in the Supper with Christ's humanity in Heaven.

4. Question 48 states the objection preferred by Lutherans against the Reformed doctrine. Lutherans said: "In this way the two natures in Christ are separated from one another, if the manhood be not where the Godhead is."

Answer 48 gives the best answer the Reformers could give to this strong allegation. They said: "By no means: for since the Godhead is incomprehensible and everywhere present, it must follow that it is indeed beyond the manhood which it has assumed, but is yet none the less in the same also, and remains personally united to it."

In other words, the Godhead of Christ is with His people, really, truly on earth. According to the Divine Majesty, the grace, and Spirit of Christ, He is at no time absent from us; but the union of the Godhead and manhood prevails only in Heaven. It is evident that the metaphysical difficulty was not overcome. In Heaven the Divine and human were not separated; but on earth and in the Lord's Supper, the Godhead only was active; here there was a separation.

5. This issue between Lutherans and Reformed is past. Both Churches have transcended it; there has been great progress in theological and philosophical thought. There are better views of Divine omnipotence, better views of the capacities of manhood. Heaven and earth are not now by the foremost theologians of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches held to be locally separated.

The effect is that this peculiar phase of explanation of the Lord's Supper advanced by Calvin is now superseded. The best thinkers of the Reformed Church do not affirm that the communicant is by the Holy Ghost

lifted up into the heavenly realm. Instead the necessity and reality of the presence of the whole Christ by the Holy Ghost in the sacramental transaction, is freely maintained. Some ground for this important modification is even found in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper as taught by the Heidelberg Catechism.

6. There has been corresponding modification among the Lutheran theologians. I may except some classes, those who are now known as extreme symbolists, who hold firmly to the Book of Concord, represented both in Germany and in this country. But the main body of scholars among Lutherans would not affirm the communication of the attributes of Humanity to the divine nature, as was held in the controversy with the Reformed Church.

On this difficult question the two branches of the Reformation have both in faith and in thought been approaching each other. Practically, now there is but little and unimportant difference between the Lutheran Church of the General Synod and the Reformed Church on the question of the presence of the Humanity of our Lord in the Holy Communion. Indeed, there is one wing of the Reformed Church in this country that may be called Zwinglian; and there is a wing in the Lutheran Church that has reacted from the old Lutheran doctrine just as far toward the Zwinglian branch of the Reformed Church.

Rev. Dr. Schmucker, an eminent minister and professor, could not go so far as the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism on the Lord's Supper would warrant; but Dr. Schmucker has in this respect very few successors in the Lutheran Church of America at present.

Remarks: My advice is, that in teaching the Catechism to catechumens, or in preaching to the congregation, these two questions be omitted. My reasons are as follows:

(1) The issue here raised is specific and metaphysical. Educated ministers, versed in Doctrinal History, may grasp the significance of the issue, but neither laymen of ordinary intelligence nor catechumens can grasp it.

(2) This metaphysical issue is passed; it was a question of the sixteenth century which extended into the seventeenth, but is not now a living question. The Reformed and Lutheran Churches are not on this point arrayed against each other as they were then; both Churches in its leading representatives and largely the whole body of the people, have philosophically and psychologically transcended the views which gave rise to the issue.

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(3) A discussion of this issue before a congregation or a catechetical class does a wrong both to the Lutheran and Reformed Churches. You make the impression that these two branches are now joining issue on this metaphysical point, just as they did 300 years ago. This is not correct. For this reason I advise pastors to pass by these two knotty questions and answers. In affirming that the Reformed and the Lutherans have both transcended this issue made in the latter half of the sixteenth century I do not imply that these Churches are now in harmony; there are variations in the methods and doctrines of these Churches, but these variations are different from those prevailing in the sixteenth century.

Q. 49.

Observe the force of the question. It puts *emphasis* on the Ascension. It assumes that spiritual good comes to us not from our Lord's death only; but especially also from His Ascension. The Ascension of Christ, therefore, is a necessity in the economy of Redemption, no less than His death. The reason for the ascension is two-fold. It lies in the Mediator himself. The ascension is related to Him; for Him it is a necessity. The other reason pertains to His people. On our account it is needful that we do not remain upon earth in the natural body, but that we leave this world and go to the Father. Our Catechism lays stress on the second reason. The benefit we receive from the Ascension is three-fold: (1) He becomes our Advocate. (2) His Ascension is the ground of our ascension. (3) By virtue of His advocacy we are assured of our ultimate triumph.

1. The Incarnate Son in heaven is our Advocate. He represents us. He answers for us who are guilty. He is the living bond of life communion between the Father and us.

2. We have a two-fold form for expressing the same distinctive truth. He is in "the presence of the Father;" where the Father is He is. The pronoun "He" designates the Son of Man in union with God. The other form of expression is, "in Heaven." These two expressions intensify the force with which the Catechism asserts the reality of the ascension; the reality of the Son of Man living in and with God the Father in His own glory.

3. Jesus Christ, our Advocate, is clothed in human nature, veritable human nature, which the Catechism here denotes by the words "our flesh in heaven." Mankind redeemed, sanctified, perfected in the person of Christ, has transcended the entire mundane sphere, overcome all limitations, and become qualified in ideal perfection for abode in Heaven. Eternal life, when negatively considered, called immortality, is a demonstrated fact.

4. Jesus, the God-man in Heaven, the Catechism says, is the sure pledge that He will also take us up to Himself. Pledge is a rather external word, not the best that could be used: this deficiency, however, is relieved by the figure which the Catechism adopts from St. Paul.

Pledge means the assurance of Heaven, to us now on earth. As certainly as Jesus is there, so certainly shall we also ascend to Heaven. The marrow, however, of the truth of the ascended Christ relatively to us, is expressed by the figure of speech, Head, which implies that the Church militant is His body; believers are His members. Between the head and the members of the body there is an internal, vital indissoluble connection in the sphere of nature and in the sphere of grace. In the spiritual kingdom of God there is by the Holy Ghost, between Jesus in Heaven and us on earth, a connection, which is vital and indescribable: The Spirit dwells in Him and in us. As His members we are His heirs, heirs with Him of God.

The Catechism says, "take us up to Himself," not to heaven, not its felicity, but to Himself. This accords with the teaching of Jesus, John 14: "I will come again and take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also." It is Jesus Christ, it is living communion by the Spirit with Him, that makes heaven; when its communion is final, perfect, then we attain to the perfection of heaven.

What evidence have we now that Christ in heaven is our inheritance? The Catechism answers this question in the third part, "He sends us his Spirit," etc. Compare Col. 3: 1-2.

The word "earnest" embodies the import of a figure of speech prevalent in the Holy Scriptures: it is another word for the first fruits of the harvest; the ears of grain that first ripen are an evidence of the harvest in store for us, and as such furnish us evidence of plentitude. The Holy Spirit of Christ, including the fruits of His gracious influences in the Church, are first fruits of the final spiritual harvest, hence called *earnest*.

The Spirit in us, the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, hope, are evidences of the vital bond, binding Him to us and us to Him; by the Spirit's power we seek those things which are above; by no other power may we thus seek; depraved human nature does not seek the things above where Christ sitteth, nor can any art, or science, or philosophy, or culture, endow us either with the capacity or the desire to seek the things above. The union and communion with Christ, the devotion with which we labor for Christ glorified, and for the honor of His kingdom, is the beginning of the heavenly Life, is the first fruit of the harvest; and to us the assurance that we also shall in Christ ascend up and be where He is.

The purpose of the ascension and session of Jesus at God's right hand is two-fold.

The one relates to Himself, the other to His Church, especially in her relation to sin. As regards Himself, Jesus ascended to Heaven, inasmuch as the ascension is the necessary end and conclusion of His mediatorship. He must return to His Father, or fail to realize ideal manhood. His entire life in the flesh looked forward, on the one hand, to complete victory over sin and Satan, on the other hand, to the realization of the design of His incarnation. To be the Mediator in the true sense, He must become the perfect Man, He must attain to final glorification. This must be irrespectively of particular benefits that this one or that one may derive from His ascension.

The other purpose relates immediately to us. His glorification has a purpose concerning the whole human race; all men who believe are designed to share ideal, glorified manhood. It is this two-fold aspect of the ascension which the Catechism emphasizes, and to this an exposition of the answer will be limited.

1. Christ ascended into Heaven "for this end." The ascension had a purpose relative to fallen mankind, a purpose which Jesus kept steadily before His eye through His entire mediatorial work on earth. That end embraced His Headship or the assertion of His Headship over the Church.

Our Catechism says: "That He might there appear as Head of His Church." In heaven He asserts His authority and power as Head of the Church. His Kingship attains its acme not in His resurrection and ascension, but in His session at God's right hand. Scriptural speech on this matter is a figure drawn from oriental monarchies. When the emperor was on his throne the highest place of authority and dominion next to him, was the seat or place at his right hand. "Right hand" in scriptural speech expresses what our Lord means when He says, "All authority is given me in heaven and on earth," Math. 28:19. To maintain, to exercise this authority in the interest of His chosen ones, is the end, under this view of it, of the ascension.

3. By Him, the ascended One, the Father governs all things. The expression "all things" is adopted from Scripture. It is used by our Lord, by the Apostles. "All things" denote universal dominion; dominion over all realms in the first creation, dominion over the new creation in all its relations conformably to Scripture. The Catechism teaches not that God as God governs the world.

This is a very important point of difference, very often overlooked. There is no Divine government of the world, using these words in their strict meaning. The government of the world is Christological, Divine-human. It is not God who, according to Christianity, is the final judge of all men, but God as manifested, revealed in the person of the Son of Man; hence the New Testament names the Son of Man, not the Son of God, as Judge at the final day. If we take in the whole of the New Testament truth we shall come to see that the life of the Incarnate Son has cosmic significance.

The Catechism does not ask, what is the glory of our Head? but in accordance with its ruling habit it asks, what benefit do we receive from His glory?

The answer is two-fold: By His Holy Spirit He sheds forth heavenly gifts in us; then He by His power defends and preserves us against all enemies. The first part of the answer denotes the personal gain to us as Christ's members; the second touches our relations outwardly, that is, to our enemies.

1. By His Holy Spirit He sheds forth heavenly gifts in us. The Spirit here named is the Spirit of the God-man glorified, not simply the third member of the God-head; not the Spirit as animating fallen humanity at large; not as active in the Old Testament economy, nor even as living and working in Jesus, during His humiliation in the flesh. Holy Spirit embraces the truth of all these negatives, but the truth culminates in the final fact that Humanity, regenerated in Jesus, triumphant over the kingdom of darkness, has been and is by the Spirit ideally perfected in heaven. The Spirit going forth from the perfected God-man, bearing and communicating to us the perfections of that incarnate life, is here spoken of by the Catechism. Gal. 4: 5. 6. Hence the pronoun *His* is emphatic.

2. By His Holy Spirit He sheds forth heavenly gifts. Heaven denotes that transcendent, perfect realm centering in the Son of Man glorified. It does not mean the eternal heaven of the triune God apart from the incarnate Son. It denotes those gifts proceeding from the perfected status of Jesus in the presence of His Father in heaven. The gifts are the gifts of the cross of the glorified Son of Man. These gifts are not bestowed according to a divine decree, but Christ's Spirit sheds forth those gifts in us.

3. His Holy Spirit does not shed forth heavenly gifts in all men, but in us, His members. To receive heavenly gifts pre-supposes and involves vital union to Christ, our Head; in unregenerate men, not members of Christ, there is no capacity for these gifts. This doctrine is in full accord not only with all Reformed teaching, but responsive to all the teachings of the New Testament.

4. Christ, by the power of the Spirit, does two things; He defends, and He preserves us. The one is rather negative, the other positive. The words "by his power," do not mean immediately by Christ's power, but by the power of Christ's Spirit. The Spirit of Christ is the agency through whom the virtue of Christ glorified avails for us.

5. He defends us; the word, *defends*, looks at the antagonism, the warfare waged against us by enemies. Christ by the Spirit wards off attacks from the kingdom of darkness, whether they come immediately from evil spirits, or are mediated through human and natural agencies. The word *preserves* is more positive; Christ by the Spirit, nourishes us and thus keeps us in the strength of communion with Himself; whereby we have spiritual ability to abide in the faith and persevere, onward to the end.

Q. 51.

Remarks: 1. When we teach that heavenly gifts by the Spirit, as taught by the Catechism, are shed forth in Christ's members and in no others, we do not mean that the agency of the Spirit excludes the world at large. Through the word preached and by other agencies the Spirit of Christ touches and moves unregenerate men, but unregenerate men touched, moved deeply, wrought upon by the Spirit, do not share the heavenly gifts spoken of by the Catechism.

2. Heavenly gifts are for the unregenerate a possible attainment, and designed for them through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So long, however, as men of the world are not responsive to the Spirit, they remain strangers to these heavenly gifts, though designed for them as for Christ's members.

Q. 52.

The second Coming of Christ is to be studied under a two-fold aspect. It has significance and value in itself; nay, the second Advent is the culmination, the completion of the first advent. The first advent would not have been if the second were not an essential part of Christianity. Christian people need to contemplate that final epoch for its own sake; its worth, its glory, lies in its relation to the whole scheme of redemption.

The other aspect of the second advent pertains to us as subjects of redemption. The same remark made on question 50 is applicable here. Our Catechism does not dwell mainly on the first view, but on the second. It does not ask, "What dost thou understand by the coming again of Christ to judgment?"

The question as here presented is entirely legitimate, but on account of the omission of the deeper and more significant truth, its tendency is toward one-sidedness in Christian doctrine and Christian experience.

The answer is rich and forcible. The gist of it may be given in these words: "I look for the self-same one to come again as judge from Heaven."

1. For the second coming of Christ, the Catechism looks in hope and with joy. It is not an object of dread; instead, it is a good, the noblest good in the personal history of

Jesus Christ. Why? Because it consummates the wonderful exhibition of divine love, first announced in Eden and actually begun in the birth of Jesus; hence the words, "with uplifted head." The Church, notwithstanding its persecutions, is not to be downcast and fearful. The seeming strength and bitter violence of her enemies shall not abate her courage; but in the midst of the battle, she is to look onward and forward with confidence and firm hope.

2. For whom am I to look? "The self-same one who has before offered Himself for me to the judgment of God and removed from me all curse." Notice the force of the words: the Son of Man, Jesus of Nazareth, the rejected man of sorrows who was crucified between two thieves; it is He, the self-same One; compare Math. 25, who shall come again as judge from Heaven.

3. Who shall come? Our Lord says, John 5, because He is the Son of Man authority to judge is committed to Him. What qualifies Him to judge? His incarnation; profound humility; atoning sacrifice; His descent into hades; His triumphant resurrection. The mediatorial life which He lived and which He perfected in our humanity—that fits Him to be judge. The new Man, the second Adam, one with God in the person of the only-begotten Son—He has all authority in heaven and on earth.

4. The second part of the answer looks at the results of the second coming. These results, as represented by the Catechism are in the first place negative. My enemies and His enemies He will cast into everlasting condemnation.

The issue of the second advent for the wicked is the second death. Condemnation presupposes guilt. The second death is not a misfortune, not merely a calamity, but a condition which turns on the will of the wicked.

They are Christ's enemies. First and foremost, they have antagonized Him; and toward Him they continue to stand in an antagonistic attitude. Not from ignorance, nor from weakness, but from aversion to good. Condemnation is the necessary opposite condition; and it will continue as long as aversion to the good, antagonism to Jesus Christ, continues.

The second death follows the second advent; and is therefore to be distinguished from that intermediate period of death which precedes the Resurrection.

5. For the righteous the issue of the second coming will be their complete triumph, the perfection of the new life. "He shall take me to Himself." These words are

fully warranted by the New Testament. "I go," said our Lord, "to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am you may be also." The condition of the righteous following the final judgment is other than their condition during the intermediate period of bliss. To be with Himself expresses the highest conception on the one side of triumph over evil, and on the other side of the possible life-communion of love with God in Him.

6. To be with Him as He is with the Father is heaven. It is the final heaven, that state of perfect human activity in the fellowship of Christ which constitutes the ultimate end of the creation of the first man, but especially the ultimate end of the new creation in Jesus Christ. Therefore the Catechism uses the words heavenly joy and glory. Joy is the conscious, unchanging possession of the highest conceivable good; the good that absolutely fulfills all possible aspirations of original manhood, particularly the aspirations of the new creation in Christ. Glory expresses the full, free manifestation, the outflowing or the revelation of what the new life in Christ by the Spirit is.

Remarks: 1. The final judgment is an object of hope. Why? Because it is the consummation of good, considered negatively, regarding moral evil, regarding death and all miseries caused by sin. The judgment is the final emancipation. Considered positively, the consummation of the life-communion of love with God the Father in Jesus through the Spirit. It is a consummation so rich, so mighty, so transcendent, that the mind staggers in the attempt to portray it.

It proclaims the judgment as a good, therefore an object of desire and longing. If the signs of the times indicate the approaching end, the pulpit should anticipate the end with uplifted head. To preach the anticipation is strengthening, ennobling and purifying in its influence.

2. Only to the finally impenitent is the judgment an object of terror; not to the weak, not to the unlearned, not to the simple minded, but to the enemies of Jesus Christ. Much harm is done by setting forth the judgment, as if it were an impending crisis of evil to the Church.

3. Preach on the judgment in the spirit of this answer. Look at it predominantly on its positive side; that is its real significance, that its primary intention. The effect of the judgment on the wicked is incidental, undesigned; yet necessary because of persistent wickedness.

OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

The question is broad, because it touches both the person of the Holy Ghost and His work in Christ's members. The answer accordingly is two-fold: (1) It teaches who the Holy Ghost is, as to His person and relations in the God-head; (2) the answer considers the relation of the Holy Ghost to us the members of Christ, and to the work which the Holy Ghost performs in us.

1. What dost thou believe? *Believe* is emphatic. The Holy Ghost is the object of faith; the eye of the regenerate soul sees Him revealed and given by the incarnate Son. Him (the Spirit) we learn to know, not by secular learning, not by philosophy, not by scientific induction, but by spiritual discernment, by an intuitive act, predicable only of the "*new man*."

No branch of Christianity is so little accessible to the mind of the flesh as the person and work of the Holy Ghost. One great reason is that the Holy Ghost is the acme of the revelation and redemption. His advent is the pivot on which turns all right knowledge and all godly living.

2. The Spirit is co-eternal with God the Father and the Son. What is God?

The New Testament answer to this question is this: God is the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost; not God is the Father, God is the Son, nor yet God is the Spirit. Either of these three particulars by itself is radically defective, but each, Father, Son and Spirit, enter into the economy and the structure of revelation and redemption. Wanting either the Spirit, or the Son, or the Father, the idea of Christianity is radically false. Accordingly the Catechism says, "The Spirit is co-eternal;" not that God the Father is the Spirit, nor that God the Son is the Spirit; but the Spirit is a member eternally of the God-head.

3. The Spirit is given unto me. The Catechism refers to Pentecost. From the Father in and through the glorified Son the Spirit comes; He comes as the bearer of the crucified Christ risen and glorified. Thus given the Spirit is the bond, the perpetual living bond between Christ glorified and me. This truth also is primarily the object of faith. The Spirit in me affects my feelings, my thoughts, my conduct, the whole habit of my life. But neither

the habit of my life, nor my conduct, nor my feeling, is the test of the truth that the Spirit is given to me; that I know from and through my faith in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The gift of the Spirit to me is a necessary fact if I am baptized into Christ; though if I lack the right ethical experience I may fail to realize the design of the gift of the Spirit.

4. This clause, "is also given unto me," teaches a general truth on which firmly we are to rely. The following clauses set forth the operation and effects of this truth. These immediate effects of the Spirit possessed by me are three-fold: (1) By true faith the Spirit makes me a partaker of Christ; (2) sustaining this relation of faith to Christ, the Spirit comforts me; (3) the possession of the Spirit is an abiding possession.

5. The Holy Ghost makes me by true faith a partaker of Christ and all His benefits. This clause is important; the two primary elements entering into the Christian salvation are here united. The one is the Holy Ghost; the Spirit given on the day of Pentecost, makes me a partaker of Christ. Not God the Father, not God the Son, nor God the Spirit simply contemplated as the third member of the Godhead; but the Spirit as the bearer of the virtue of the God-man enthroned in Heaven. It is He, not I, He the Spirit makes me a partaker of Christ. He, the Spirit, effects this good through my faith. Says the Catechism: "By a true faith the Spirit makes me a partaker." It is I that believe, not the Spirit in my stead. Faith is my act. It turns on my will. This is the human, the subjective side of personal salvation. This clause emphasizes and unites both. The two things are by the New Testament conjoined. Here the Catechism clearly sets forth the answer to the question: How do I become a member of Christ? The answer is two-fold. First, I become a member of Christ by the Holy Spirit; secondly, I become a member of Christ by true faith. If either be wanting I am not, in the New Testament sense, a member of Christ. Observe the order in which His benefits are taught. The words are not, first, the "benefits" of Christ, then Christ Himself. The words are Christ and all His benefits. The possession of Christ conditions our interest in His benefits. Forgiveness of sins, is possible to those only who have Christ by faith. Answer 20 is parallel to this clause. See Answers 49, 51, 32.

6. The Spirit "comforts me." "Comfort" is to be held in

Q. 53.

close connection with all the statements which precede. The pronoun *me* means a man regenerated by the Holy Ghost who from the heart believes in Jesus Christ. Comfort is limited to him; and the comfort is Christian comfort. It is the spiritual strength in our weakness, the assurance that we shall be guided by God's wisdom and love, which grows forth from the relation which we bear to God in His incarnate Son. Comfort is the result of the truth taught in the previous clause, which says: "I am a partaker of Christ and all His benefits." By the Spirit I am in vital relation to the Head of the Church. I grow up in this vital relation. In this relation I have comfort.

7. The Holy Ghost shall "abide with me" forever. The first person is used, but it designates every individual Christian.

Q. 54.

The gist of this answer is expressed in the words: "The Son of God gathers for Himself unto everlasting life, a chosen communion."

1. "Son of God." The Catechism gives our glorified Lord His divine title; not Christ, His official title, not Son of Man, a name whereby He is fitted to be judge; but Son of God, in order to emphasize the immediate eternal relation of the Head of the Church to the being of the Godhead.

2. The Son of God "gathers a chosen communion." Not the will of God as God, not God in the person of the Father, but the will of God in the person of His Son, is active in electing from the whole human race, the members of His mystical body. The definition of the Church, as given by the Catechism, is given by the one word *chosen communion*. "Chosen" turns on the will of God, not merely on the will of man. "Communion," etymologically, means two parties living by reciprocal interaction. The one party is the Son of God incarnate, the Head. The other is we, His members. The communion is from Christ, an impartation of His virtue and His gifts to us, His members. The other side is our fellowship with Him. The communion, living in this fellowship of Christ, the Head with us, and of us in fellowship with Him, is the Church.

3. This communion the Son of God not only gathers, but "defends and preserves." "Defence" is negative. It is the work of Christ in the Spirit by which enemies are met,

warded off, overcome. "Preserve" is more positive. It denotes the work of Christ, whereby He nourishes us, strengthens us, ever communicates of His divine-human fulness to us, whereby we are kept, living the new life in the exercise of true faith.

The activity of our Lord, expressed by these three words, gathers, defends, preserves, embraces the chosen communion in its totality, the past, present and future.

4. The communion is chosen and preserved "in the unity of the true faith." True faith is the objective truth as affirmed by and organized into the Apostolic Creed. The Church is *one* in this faith. The life of Christ, active in the communion as a whole and in each member, on the one hand by the Spirit, on the other by faith, is the foundation and law of this unity.

The only exception to the general confession of this one faith is that the Greek Church rejects what is known as the *filioque* clause, added to the Nicene Constantinopolitan creed by the Council of Toledo, 589.

5. The Son of God chooses the "communion" from "the whole human race." That expresses the extent of area over which the Church is designed to reign. These words answer to the command: "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." These two expressions, "all nations" and "the whole human race" are commensurate. In point of time, the activity of the Son prevails from its beginning to its end. This activity is going on and will continue, embracing all nations, until the Messianic ages have run their course, and the kingdom of God on earth has attained to full maturity. Then the kingdom, the Church, this chosen communion, will be fit, spiritually qualified, to transcend the intermediate heaven, and rising with the Lord, enter into the final heaven.

6. The final truth of the answer is personal. I am a living member of this communion, and ever shall remain a member. As a member I draw my life, the support of the new creation, from Christ *in* this communion. The Son of God ever with increasing power communicates Himself to me. The bond of fellowship becomes stronger and stronger. It cannot be broken by death, nor shall any enemy be able to pluck me out of His hand. John 10:28-30.

Remark: Two things need here to be emphasized. On the one hand, a correct conception of the internal, vital relation between Christ and His members. This is a new fellow-

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ship, not only different from the fallen Adamic race, but qualitatively different from the relation of the Jews to God prior to the advent of the Messiah. There is a chasm between the Jewish and Christian order of life notwithstanding the fact that the two dispensations are parts of one supernatural Messianic revelation.

The other point is that, in this fellowship believers have the forgiveness of sins. As their life is different so the article of death for them is different. Their entire history, starting from a new principle, moves on a different plane, so that believers are not only practically different, but also constitutionally different.

Q. 55.

Observe that the article on Communion of Saints follows the article on the Church, and that follows the article on the Holy Spirit. This is the ideal order. Of these three things we may say: No Church, no Communion of Saints; again, no Holy Spirit, no Christian Church. The Catechism (by implication) expounds the Communion of Saints in this objective relation.

Two things especially enter into the answer: 1. That believers all and every one, as members of Christ, have part in Christ, in all His treasures and gifts. 2. That each one must feel himself bound to use his gifts to the advantage of other members. The first part deals with the reciprocal relation between Christ and His members. The second is a consequence of the first, and deals with the relation which Christ's members bear to one another.

1. Believers "have part" in Christ. Here the subjective or personal aspect of Christianity is emphasized. The relation turns on my faith. The relation between Christ and the baptized believers is in kind wholly different from the relation of Christ to such as are unbaptized and unbelieving. Between Christ and believers in the Spirit the relation is immediate. The two constitute the Church. Hence the Catechism speaks of believers not as Church members, but as Christ's members. Being His members they, like branches, have part in the life, the virtue, the strength of the vine. See Q. 32.

2. Having part in Him, believers share "His treasures

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and gifts." "Gifts" denote spiritual blessings given to us, and by us received. "Treasures" denote that unfathomable richness of spiritual good in reserve in Him. From this treasury continually are proceeding new forms of blessing, and we become partakers of these treasures in proportion to our strength of faith and spiritual capacity.

3. This fellowship with Christ is affirmed of all believers, "all and every one." There is no difference on account of race, nationality, rank, age, weakness or strength. A leaf of a branch of the vine is as really a member of it as the cluster of grapes.

4. Being members of Christ, sharing each and all His treasures and gifts, believers are "members" of one another. They differ widely in position as to office and sphere of activity, yet by a universal bond they are one, have the same life, salvation, faith, hope. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." Eph. 4: 4-6; Rom. 12: 4, 5.

5. On this ground a Christian is bound to use his gifts, not primarily for himself, but for the temporal and spiritual good of other members.

Q. 56.

The Answer is twofold: Emphasizing forgiveness under its negative aspect, relatively to sins and sinfulness; developing the positive side of forgiveness, implied by the first part.

1. The grammatical subject of the Answer is *God*. Of Him forgiveness is predicated. The words, "no more remember" express a richer evangelical truth than the word "pardon."

2. Forgiveness pertains to the judicial relation of the wrong-doer to God. Wrong-doing incurs penalty. Penalty is primarily ethical and spiritual. It is the condemnation adjudged to the wrong-doer, and works in the sphere of personality. To forgive is to take away or withdraw the sentence of condemnation. The words, "no more remember" imply not only that the penalty ceases, but that the wrong done by us is, as it were, on the part of God no longer known or felt. His attitude to the transgressor is that which would prevail if there had been no transgression. Is. 43:25.

3. Forgiveness relates to transgression. The guilt in-

curred is removed. The false ethical and judicial attitude of fallen mankind toward God puts mankind under God's condemnation and displeasure. That displeasure rests on the race as a whole. A believer, by accepting Christ, comes to stand in a new, right relation to God. In this relation the displeasure or condemnation of God ceases to rest upon him, though a perverted human nature may still influence his life and character.

4. The ground of this forgiving grace is Christ's satisfaction.

During the Reformation period, as also during the centuries since, emphasis was put on the negative aspect of Christianity, and of the atoning sacrifice. The necessity of the new life, of the new creation in Christ, did not receive equal emphasis. Satisfaction means that the penal demands of violated law are met by the suffering and death of Christ. The active obedience of Christ did not enter really into the essence of the atonement. This negative phase of the atonement is scriptural and Christian, but it needs to be complemented by another truth in great part overlooked. The law is satisfied not only by suffering its penalty, but by positive obedience. The doing of the will of God in the life, in the whole life of Christ, belongs to the process whereby the righteous God and sinful man were made one.

5. "Forgiveness" we must emphasize chiefly as involving the *judicial* relation between God and man. The existing physical condition of mankind is involved in sin; and ultimately all the consequences of violated divine and human law will be overcome, not however at once, but only in process of time. When the law of the new life shall utterly overcome and set aside the disorganization of nature, of the whole physical constitution, the believer will be really emancipated from these consequences of transgression. Forgiveness, therefore, anticipates the Second Coming, the Resurrection, and with it complete triumph over the entire realm of sin. Hence the Creed passes from forgiveness to the resurrection.

6. The second part emphasizes the positive, new attitude and relation of the believer, a member of Christ, to God. As God will no more remember my sins, He "graciously imparts to me the righteousness of Christ." By righteousness is meant the sacrificial merits of Jesus. He fulfilled the law by expiating the guilt of sin, bearing the penalty. He stands before God approved and accepted. By faith

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believers receive the righteousness of Christ. This righteousness is not externally set to our account. It is not imparted in the sense of the Decrees of the Synod of Dort, nor in the sense of the Westminster Standards, but we are really, truly possessed of righteousness in Christ.

7. Connected with this teaching is the assurance "that I may never more come into condemnation." I in Christ am in Him at peace with God, released from condemnation, the recipient of His love, and His child. Therefore in Christ I am heir of eternal life.

Remarks: 1. The evangelical preacher should declare to all true believers positively and unconditionally that their sins are forgiven. Do not teach that if they live and work faithfully, in the end God will have mercy and they will be accepted. That has in it a touch of Romanism. I am accepted on account of what Jesus Christ is and of what He has done. I have a right to hear the free gospel, a right to be declared free from the condemnation of sin.

2. There are two opinions or theories. 1st, that men have to work and strive and pray in order that they may attain to acceptance, joy and freedom. That is Romish at heart. The other is that of free, sovereign grace. I accept Jesus Christ, and being in Him I am God's child. In the joy and freedom and love of a child, I live and toil and work, laying my life an offering of thankfulness on the altar of sacrifice. That is Evangelic Protestant.

Q. 57.

The Catechism emphasizes the "body." The body will be raised up. On this the Answer hinges. After this life, that is, in the article of natural death, the soul immediately will be taken up to Christ, its Head, not the body. The body will be laid in the ground, earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes. In the end, at the Second Coming, the body will be raised up and again united with the soul. This implies that the soul, separated from the body, is blessed with Christ. Though it be blessed with Christ through many ages of time, the body shall be raised, refashioned and glorified with the soul. In this reunion the body will be like unto "the glorious body of Christ."

This sentiment, though prevailing from the third century onward through the Middle Ages to the Reformation, and

even down to our day, does not, in my opinion, harmonize with the teaching of the New Testament, especially with the philosophy of the Resurrection as developed by Paul in 1 Cor. 15. But the difference does not imply that the resurrection is less real than Jerome taught or than the Reformed Catechisms teach. A reaction against defective conceptions of the resurrection is false when it overlooks and denies the fundamental truth which has always been affirmed and always has reigned in the Christian Church.

Remarks: 1. The resurrection is the counterpart of death. Death is the fruit of sin. Sin has its seed in the spirit. The spirit is deepest in man. Man being an organism, the spirit reigns in and over the wholeness of manhood. Sin, a false self-assertion against God of the spirit, poisons, disorganizes, pervades, reigns over, the whole manhood of man, hence death.

2. Death is an epoch in man's history; but an abnormal epoch, its nature and character being derived from sin. Under another view, death is the ultimate penalty of sin. Death, as an epoch, is a point or node of life through which the individual man passes. But the epoch is the beginning of a post-earthly period of the sinfulness of "the natural man." Hence death reigns over the entire history of fallen humanity.

3. Death is predicable of the whole man. Not the body only, but the wholeness of manhood is under the reigning power and abnormal force of sin. Man, therefore, in body, soul and spirit dies.

4. The resurrection is likewise to be predicated, not of the body separated from the soul and spirit, but of the manhood of man. Jesus, in the wholeness of his constitution, offered himself on the cross, overcame death and was revived. But His resurrection was a transition from the natural, from the earthly, to the super-earthly, super-mundane realm. This is the type and law of the resurrection of the righteous. The new man in Christ, in the wholeness of his constitution, spirit, soul and body, shall go forth from the intermediate period (in the New Testament called Hades) into the final heaven at the second coming of Christ.

5. As sin and death are predicable of the whole man, so in Christ is the resurrection from the dead. That resurrection is to be studied and understood solely in the light of

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the resurrection of the God-man. It involves a thorough change in condition and relations.

6. The words in the article of the Creed, "the resurrection of the body," are not to be criticised, but to be rightly interpreted. "Body" is a figure of speech in which the part stands for the whole; a common one in the New Testament. The body will be raised up, fashioned after the glorified body of Jesus Christ; but the body includes the whole of man.

I do not, however, ignore the historical fact that when the Creed was in process of formation belief in the resurrection of the material body was the marked feature in the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead.

Q. 58.

We have the gist of the Answer in this clause: "I shall after this life possess complete bliss." It is the blessedness of heaven rather than the heavenly life itself which the Answer develops. Future bliss is immediately connected with present joy.

1. The Answer moves in the sphere of personal experience. The genius of the Creed, however, emphasizes not primarily an experience, but a mystery, the final reality, belonging to the new creation in Christ Jesus. Of course the life everlasting is something to be possessed and enjoyed by the believer.

2. Very correctly the Catechism connects two things, the present and the future, the joy in Christ which I now have and the complete bliss which hereafter I shall possess. The two things are one possession. But one order of eternal life is set before us in the New Testament. It is the new life in Jesus Christ, the communion of love with God, quickened by the Holy Ghost, through my faith in the incarnate Son, who is the beginning, the fountain of this new life-communion of love with God.

3. Now I have the beginning. I, by faith which works through love, possess Jesus Christ. He lives in me, I live in Him. In as far as I really appropriate Him, I share His life. I have joy, for spiritual joy springs from the spiritual good which is in me by the possession of Christ, the highest possible Good. This is a beginning, the first fruits of the possession that I shall hereafter enjoy.

4. What I shall after this earthly life possess is "complete

Q. 58.

bliss." Bliss is a stronger term than joy, but both are of the same kind. The difference lies in this, that when I have attained unto the resurrection of the dead, when I shall be glorified, when my whole new being shall be in final state of transformation, fully fashioned according to the image of my Lord and Saviour, then I shall have new capacities, new positive fitness, and I shall be capable of taking in more of the infinite fulness of that highest Good, which is Jesus Christ; and as I possess higher, more perfect fitness, it will be possible for the incarnate Son to reveal to me and in me the untold riches of His glory. In this sense I may speak of the culmination of joy, of the "bliss" which our Catechism calls "complete."

5. In proof of the doctrine taught by the Answer the Catechism quotes 1 Cor. 2:9. But the application is not valid. This defect does not, however, imply that the truth set forth in the Answer is in the least affected.

This passage is a quotation by Paul from Isaiah. As used by Paul it teaches not that the blessedness of the Christian transcends human conception, but that Christianity itself, or Christian truth, can not be discovered or known by human power.

Q. 59.

"All this" refers to the whole of the Creed, including all its articles. I believe all these articles. I believe them as they have been set forth by the Catechism.

What is the import of the question? The Answer is exceedingly rich; every word is full of meaning. It would be difficult to express more undoubted evangelic truth so closely, so forcibly, in fewer words. I, a believer, am "righteous." Righteous before whom? "Before God," standing in His presence. I am not promised righteousness, but I "am righteous." Righteous I am "in Christ." Not for His sake, because His merits are imparted to me, but I, a member of Christ, am, as a member of Him, righteous. Being in Him, and in Him righteous before God, I am an "heir." As by the law of the land, a son is heir to his father's name and estate; so I, a son of God in Christ, have an inheritance, and that inheritance "is eternal life." Rom. 8: 17.

The connection between Answers 59 and 60, embracing the entire exposition of the Creed, is very intimate, the latter following as a logical consequence of what has preceded it. The structure of the Question requires attention. The Question is positive. To be righteous is to be in right judicial relation to God. The Answer is likewise essentially positive. The whole of it is embraced in the first clause. To express the whole truth in a single proposition embracing this Answer in conjunction with the Question, we may put it thus: "I am righteous before God only by true faith in Jesus Christ." To express the nature of justification as taught by Paul and formulated by the Reformers, we may say: The transgressor, guilty on account of transgression, is justified, that is, he comes to stand really in right judicial relation to God by faith in Christ. The remainder of the Answer is an exposition of the first clause. The gist of the exposition may be put thus: God grants me the perfect satisfaction of Christ. The succeeding and preceding explanatory clauses unfold and express negatively and positively the character of the sinner's right judicial relation to God.

1. *The Central Statement.* The person who justifies is "God." The person justified is I, the believer, the one who exercises the living faith in Jesus Christ. Belonging to Christ, God grants me Christ's satisfaction. "Grants" denotes the reality of the justification, that is, that I in truth partake of and possess through God's grace the satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ. "Imputes" is rather external and forensic, and refers to the fact that God also declares me a sharer in Christ's satisfaction. Both the Reformed and Lutheran Reformers laid main stress on the first, viz: God really grants Christ's satisfaction. Later Calvinism, especially after the Westminster Standards were framed (1648), laid chief stress on imputation. The blessing granted and imputed is expressed by three words:

a. Satisfaction. Christ suffered fully the penalty of sin. My guilt is expiated by Him. God's wrath in Him is appeased.

b. Righteousness. The merit of His atoning sacrifice is

mine. Here the Catechism, as also a great deal of current theology, lays chief stress on the negative side, on the merit derived from the sufferings of Christ.

c. Holiness. This is positive. The entire life of Jesus was a life of obedience to the law of God, wherein He perfectly fulfilled God's will; realizing in His history the ideal of moral law. A member of Christ by faith, the grant of God includes participation in Christ's holiness.

2. We have two intermediate clauses, expressing the condition of this grant of justification. The first is negative and relates to me, the believer. God grants "without any merit of mine." Says Paul, "Not of works." The other is positive and relates to God. Why does God grant? Of mere grace. Grace is God's love bestowing gifts on the unworthy and guilty. God so *loved* the *world*. Moved by love to give His Son a propitiation, His love thereby becomes *grace*. For He gives His Son for us who by nature are unclean, and His enemies. There is no joining of any other condition with grace. "Mere grace" expresses the high plane of evangelical truth to which the Reformers rose. By the clear recognition of the essence of the gospel they broke with all the semi-pelagian errors which had for ages afflicted the church. The ground on which God justifies me is in Himself, in His grace, realized through His incarnate Son, so that my worthiness does not enter in any respect into the conditions of acceptance.

3. Let us now notice the statements which qualify the justification of believers.

"I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God." I who attain to perfect justification, have sinned not merely after an ordinary manner, but "grievously." Not against my parents and neighbors only, but against God. Not one commandment, but all have I broken. That does not imply that every justified person has been an outlaw, thief or murderer, but that the seeds of all transgression are in every man. It implies also that the fact of outward transgression is for God not a hindrance to justification. There are two more qualifying clauses.

"I have never kept any of them." There is no contradiction here. A man may at one time observe a law and break it at another. It is not necessary to justification for me to remember a single instance that I have transgressed or kept any commandment.

Q. 60.

"I am still prone always to all evil." There are in every Christian latent possibilities of evil, including the transgression of all the commandments.

Notwithstanding these facts, though my conscience accuses me of a character in the past unworthy and defiled, and though in my fallen nature there are latent possibilities of all forms of transgression; yet to me, accepting Christ, God grants Christ's perfect satisfaction.

4. The following clauses of the Answer show the character of justification.

Two things meet us in the statement; one negative, the other positive. The negative description is this, "as if I had never committed nor had any sin," *i. e.*, I am righteous before God. I share the virtue of Christ's atoning sacrifice. I in Christ share His righteousness and holiness. I stand before God clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, as if I had never been a transgressor. This negative clause has in it two things; one is external, the other internal, viz: as if I had never *committed* any sin, and as if I never had *had* any sin.

The other clause is positive. "And had myself accomplished believing heart." I am righteous not only as if all the accusations of conscience were groundless, not only as if I were as innocent as Adam before the fall, but that I am righteous as if in principle and conduct I had rendered perfect obedience to God.

5. The final clause expresses the personal condition which all along has been presumed and implied. "If only I accept." It is not necessary here to dilate on the necessity of living faith in Christ. The principle on which the gospel proceeds is that, by accepting Christ I become a living member of His body, and for this reason a participant in the rich benefits of His mediatorship.

Q. 61.

Question 61 was occasioned by a false interpretation of the office of faith.

"Why sayest thou, that thou art righteous only by faith?"

Some persons replied: because of the intrinsic worthiness of faith as faith. That answer resolves faith into a work. Then faith would become the ground in man, or the reason

Q. 61.

for forgiveness and acceptance. This notion the Catechism combats. Faith is the instrumental cause as it is called, not the *causa essendi*.

1. The exercise of the human will under the character of belief is in itself, abstractly viewed, without merit. Faith presupposes an object. The character of the faith, the benefit of the faith, turns on the nature of the object.

2. The final clause, "by faith only," modifies all that precedes it. 1. The satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ is my righteousness by faith only. 2. By faith only I can receive the same. 3. By faith only can I make Christ my own.

3. We must guard against the separation or division of Christ's work from Christ Himself. The object of my faith is not the righteousness which Jesus achieved, nor the satisfaction which He by His obedience and by His passion rendered to God, but the *object* is *Himself*. He becomes mine on the divine side by the Holy Ghost; on the human side by my own act. That act is twofold: a surrender of myself to Him, and the acceptance of Him by me. The union is to be affirmed under this twofold aspect.

4. By faith only do I make all the qualities of Christ as Mediator my own. That is, Christ becomes a power in my will, in my understanding, in my feeling, in my conduct, by my own act. There is no way by which man, a personal being, can, in the true sense, possess what Christ is, and avail himself of Christ's benefits than by the appropriation of Christ to himself.

Remark: 1. Christian faith differs from all other faith by its object. The object of faith to the Jew was Jehovah in covenant, as set forth by Moses. But to the Christian the object is the incarnate Son of God.

2. Faith in Christ is the final faith in God. God incarnate in the person of His Son, is the ultimate, truest, and most complete manifestation of His being. When I accept the incarnate Son, I stand on the highest plane of fellowship with God, and therefore on the highest plane of truth and knowledge.

Q. 62.

This Question has a bearing on the objection raised by Romanism, and those who were in sympathy with the

Q. 62.

Roman doctrine of works. It is assumed by errorists of this class, that in the nature of the case my good works must be a part of my righteousness before God. The Answer of the Catechism is twofold: 1. The only righteousness that can stand before God must be perfect. 2. My best works are defiled with sin.

1. The main question discussed by the Catechism, and at issue in the sixteenth century between the Reformers and Romanism, was the ground of acceptance before God.

For what reason does God forgive sin? Why may I hope for salvation?

The Romanists said: "Your ground for hope is your personal worthiness as really as the mediatorship of Christ; for you need a measure of personal worthiness, through good works, in order to become fit to be accepted by the Redeemer." The Reformers replied that Christ's mediatorship was the *only* ground. We have to keep this issue before our minds in order to understand the bearing of this Question and Answer.

The Catechism accordingly does not ask whether good works are good; nor whether personal righteousness and Christian morality are acceptable before God.

2. The righteousness that can stand before God is described under a twofold aspect. It must be perfect. That relates to its personal or subjective character. I, the personal subject, must perform a righteousness in which there is no defect whatever.

The other clause describes the object, the criterion, the standard by which I judge what is and what is not right, namely, the divine law. My righteousness to be perfect must therefore at all points be conformable, not to my judgment, not to human laws, but conformable to God's law.

3. The Catechism simply declares what is evident to every man rightly instructed in divine things. In this life our very best works are imperfect; *i. e.*, they do not answer to the divine law, and are vitiated by our sinfulness.

Q. 63.

Another difficulty or objection to the doctrine of the Catechism arises from the fact that God rewards our good

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works. "How is it that our good works merit nothing?"

There seems to be a contradiction. If good works merit nothing, then there is no reward due good works; conversely, if good works be rewarded then they merit something. This Answer to us, using the words in the sense they commonly bear, is obscure; for reward implies merit. We cannot assume that divine grace will reward evil works.

1. The difficulty is removed by recognizing the distinction which has before been made. Good works merit nothing; *i. e.*, they possess no merit whatever, as the condition of forgiveness and acceptance. The only condition of acceptance is union with Christ by faith. The cause or ground of forgiveness is the mediation of the Mediator. Reward comes not of merit, *i. e.*, it does not come because works done by me, in my own strength, by the power of my own will, are a satisfaction before God on account of which I receive pardon. But I, through faith in Christ, have forgiveness by grace. God's love to me a sinner, God laying hold of me by the Holy Ghost, and regenerating me in the fellowship of Christ, renders possible the doing of good works. The reward which follows is the consequence of this communion of grace, into which by the Spirit I am come, and which by faith I appropriate.

Q. 64.

This Question takes up another objection to the Catechism and doctrine of the Reformation. The Question implies that men will do good for profit, for personal gain, temporal or spiritual, but if there be no personal gain, temporal or eternal, they will be indifferent to the good. They will abandon themselves to the impulses of sin.

The Answer of the Catechism is the unconditional, "No." It is given in a double negative form. The image which underlies the form of the Answer is the living image of the New Testament. The relation of a believer to Christ is like the relation of the branch to the tree.

1. The man who has true faith in Christ is one who is implanted into Him. Not that Christ is implanted into the

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believer, but conversely; Christ is the new stock of life into which by the Holy Ghost men are engrafted. Engrafted by the Spirit, the virtue of this life-relation to Christ becomes their own personally by receiving it; and the act of faith is the act of receiving. Implanted into Christ, the law of life *in Christ* becomes the law of life in the believer. Just as a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, so Jesus Christ, the tree of righteousness, cannot in its living branches bring forth evil works.

2. The Catechism expresses this truth unconditionally and with great force. A thankful life expresses itself in righteousness and holiness, and it cannot do otherwise.

If righteousness do not appear in the personal life of the believer, the life of Christ by the Spirit either is wholly wanting in Him or it is latent.

3. Observation and experience confirm this general truth. As Paul expresses it: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

The history of the Church proclaims unequivocally that believers who put their whole trust in Christ and serve Him from love, are the ones who in practical life are thoroughly averse to all manner of moral evil.

Remark: Faith works by love. True faith in Christ is accordingly not passive, not a slumbering potency like the germ-life in a seed, but a vital principle which *will assert* itself with different degrees of force in the will and conduct. So far from giving occasion for fear that the doctrine of justification by faith may lead to immorality, it is just that which has, above all other theories, been most productive in believers of righteousness and godliness.

OF THE HOLY SACRAMENTS.

Q. 65.

This Question sums up in well-chosen words the results of previous teaching. Observe the distinction between Christ and Christ's benefits. *Cf.* Question 20. Observe also the order: First, Christ; second, His benefits. Again, notice the emphasis put on the vital relation to Christ. *Cf.* Question 32. Believers are Christ's members. They share all His benefits. The certainty of this truth in relation to us turns on faith. Now comes the important ques-

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tion: Whence comes this faith? Whence is the faith on which hinges my membership in Christ and my appropriation of His benefits?

1. The subject of the Answer is the "Holy Ghost." Or the Holy Ghost it is affirmed that He works faith "in our hearts." He works in the core of our personal existence, where understanding, will, emotion, meet and are one.

How does the Holy Ghost work this faith in my heart? "By the preaching of the holy gospel," the divinely appointed medium in which and through which the Holy Ghost works. Not that the Spirit works in no other way or in no other institution; but the one medium which above all others is cardinal in Christianity is the preaching and teaching of the gospel. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

2. What else does the Catechism predicate of the Holy Ghost? He confirms my faith "by the use of the Holy Sacraments." He makes the faith that I have in Christ stronger. He nourishes it, invigorates its vitality. How is this done? By the use of the Holy Sacraments. The word "use" is a Reformation word, and touches the point of difference between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, on the one side, and Romanism on the other. Rome predicates virtue of the Sacraments. Protestantism predicates benefits—personal benefits—to the believer from the *use* of them.

The virtue which Sacraments signify and seal comes to men through actual participation.

Q. 66.

According to the Catechism, our faith in Christ is confirmed by the use of the Sacraments.

1. The Sacraments are "signs and seals." What do they signify? "The promise of the gospel." What is the promise? That God grants me, "out of free grace, the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life." This is the evangelical truth which the breaking of bread and the pouring of wine, or the cup, sets forth; as a seal the Sacraments assure us, or communicate really to us, that which they signify.

The Catechism uses the noun "seals" and the verb "seal." It says, "the Sacraments are seals" and through their use "seal" to us the promise of the gospel.

2. Signs and seals are "visible" and "holy." Visible because objects of the bodily eye; holy because set apart in this ordinance from a common to a spiritual and sacred end. Observe, however, that the Catechism does not teach merely that visible, holy signs and seals are Sacraments. The signs and seals by themselves, simply as objects of the sense and of faith, are not Sacraments.

3. The signs and seals are appointed of God for a two-fold end.

a. That God may more fully *declare* the promise of the gospel. The sacramental transaction sets forth before the eye and the heart, in outward form, the great central spiritual truth—that in Christ believers have forgiveness of sins and life eternal.

b. That God, through the Sacraments, may more fully *seal* to us this promise. The virtue of Christ's cross and the resurrection passes to the believer through the Sacraments in a degree other than that grace which comes to them by the word. The Catechism says, "more fully seal." It does not explicitly here teach a difference of virtue from Christ as to kind.

How is this done? How is it that these signs and seals more fully declare and seal the promise? The Answer is "by the use thereof." Emphasis was put on this principle in the Tetrapolitan Confession of 1530, in the Augsburg Confession, and particularly in the apology of the Augsburg Confession by Melancthon. This principle, that the Sacraments avail only *by the use* of them, was common to and distinctive of all Reformed churches of the Reformation.

Rome calls the consecrated bread and wine on the altar the Sacraments, and celebrates them for the benefit of persons who are dead. The principle that the virtue of the Sacraments for believers turns on the *use* of them by communicants had no place in mediæval theology; and because this principle was ignored, a large part of the abuses and corruptions in the Roman Church gained a foothold, especially the traffic in the Mass for the relief of the dead in purgatory.

4. Reformed theologians used the word "promise" to express the substance of the gospel. They did not mean

Q. 66.

a benefit lying in the future that believers would in course of time obtain; but they desired to affirm the certainty of Grace, a certainty depending on God's word.

5. The latter half of the Answer sets forth the substance of the Promise. By the Sacraments the promise is declared and sealed. What does the promise embrace? Two things as here expressed: forgiveness out of free grace, and everlasting life, both on the ground of the Sacrifice of Christ.

Q. 67.

The Question and Answer may be considered together to set forth the import of the truth here designed to be taught. Their significance turns on the implied antithesis of the Evangelical doctrine to Romanism. The answer to the question is: "Yes, truly." What follows in the Answer affirms in equivalent words the import of the Question. Rome denies that forgiveness of sin and everlasting life are obtained on the sole ground of the sacrifice of Christ; not that His sacrifice in itself is insufficient for the purpose for which it is designed, but that the virtue of that one sacrifice avails for believers through the mass. That sacrifice is repeated by the offering on the altar of the body and blood of Christ by the priest.

The bread and wine of the Sacrament are transubstantiated into the very body and blood of Christ, including His true Godhead. The host, therefore, and the cup, are the renewed sacrifice which avails for those in whose behalf the offering is made. It avails both for the living, and for the dead in purgatory.

It was this notion of the unbloody sacrifice on the altar and the traffic in souls connected with the unbloody sacrifice, which the Reformation resisted and denounced. Hence the emphasis which our Catechism puts on the formula, "Christ on the cross." The expression that both Word and Sacraments are designed to direct faith to Christ on the cross, does not affirm the sacrifice by way of opposition to the conception or nativity of Jesus, or to His resurrection and glorification, but affirms this one sacrifice over against

Q. 67.

the unbloody sacrifice of the Church of Rome. When the Catechism says that Christ's sacrifice is the only ground, it means that this sacrifice need not be supplemented by any other sacrifice, by no service of the priest at the altar.

If the inference, as has sometimes been the case, be drawn from this teaching, that the Catechism lays no stress on the Nativity or on the Resurrection, it contradicts both the explicit teaching of the Catechism and the historical circumstances under which it was formed.

Q. 68.

In Question 66 it is said that the Sacraments are "appointed of God." Here the appointment is referred to Christ. There is no contradiction. The Sacraments are appointed of God in Christ, the Mediator. The number is *two*, in opposition to the number *seven* held by the Roman Church, adding Marriage, Confirmation, Penance, Ordination and Extreme Unction. The Roman Church concedes a difference; Baptism and the Lord's Supper are primordial, yet the remaining five are really not only ordinances or rites but Sacraments. The Greek Church is in accord with the Roman Church.

Marriage, repentance, confirmation, ordination are solemn rites which have been in use by the Church from the earliest ages; only in process of time were these raised to the dignity of Sacraments. The Reformed Church acknowledged these five as ordinances, not indeed extreme unction, but the solemnity of burial. Marriage, confirmation, ordination and burial are solemn Church rites having sacramental significance; holding that there is a divine blessing attending the scriptural performance of these ordinances.

The Reformed and Lutheran Churches in this particular differ somewhat. Luther retained not auricular confession in the Roman sense, but confession connected with absolution as a sacrament of subordinate force. Confession occupies this place now in one branch of the Lutheran Church. The sacrament in the Reformed sense is based

Q. 68.

on the idea announced by Augustine: *accedit elementum verbum et sacramentum fit*. The word comes to the elements and the sacrament is constituted. This is the general import of the doctrine of the sacrament which underlies Reformed teaching, especially the Heidelberg Catechism.

Q. 69.

A more literal wording of the original would be this: How art thou in Holy Baptism reminded and assured that the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross avails for thy benefit?

There is no word in the original answering to the English "signified and sealed;" and while the grammatical subject of the latter half of the Question is the sacrifice of Christ, in this version the grammatical subject is the catechumen, "thou." The Answer we have in the first clause: "Christ has appointed this outward washing with water and has joined therewith this promise."

1. What has Christ appointed? Outward washing with water, *i. e.*, the free application of water to the body of the candidate. Water, by the judgment of the Church universal, is, as such, consecrated to this sacramental use. Water is not by prayer or by the Word to be set apart. It is assumed that by the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan, water as water is set apart for this purpose. But the water to be used ought to be living water, water from a fountain or a running stream, not dead water from a pool or a stagnant collection. Little depends on the quantity; but the reality of the administration requires the use of water freely, not a drop only as occurs in sprinkling.

The outward washing is not by itself the Sacrament. That by which outward washing becomes a Sacrament is the conjunction therewith of the truth of the promise. When these two, the "washing" and the "promise," are really united in the administration agreeably to the Word of God, then you have Baptism, otherwise not.

2. The remainder of the Answer expounds the import or truth of the promise. In few words it is: "I am washed

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with His blood and Spirit from the pollution of my soul." The formula, "blood and Spirit," is peculiar to the Catechism, and is used throughout to denote the interior virtue of the Sacrament.

3. The main point in this Answer is that the inward virtue, viz: washing with His blood and Spirit is as certain as the outward washing of water. The outward certifies the inward. If the inward be not real, be not a present force, the outward is not, according to the Catechism, a constituent of the Sacrament of Baptism.

Q. 70.

This Question asks for the meaning of the formula given, in the preceding Answer, viz: "His blood and Spirit," which expresses the spiritual virtue, the interior force of the Sacrament. To be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ is "to have the forgiveness of sin from God," and also "to be renewed by the Holy Ghost." The Answer is given in two parts. The first pertains to the washing with His blood, and the second to the washing with the Spirit of Christ.

1. The blood of Christ denotes the offering of Himself on the cross by the shedding of the heart's blood in the laying down of His life. Jesus laid down His life under the condemnation of the law. "He hath made Him to be sin for us," 2 Cor. 5:21. The virtue of this one atoning sacrifice is made over to us by the Sacrament of Baptism. This is God's act. By it, through the Spirit, the atonement avails for us, hence called the forgiveness of sins. The subject of Baptism is by the Sacrament admitted into the covenant of grace, and occupies the right relation to God through Christ.

2. Forgiveness in baptism is not personal justification. The forgiveness is objective; *i. e.*, the subject is adopted into the family of God; thus adopted, he stands in the economy of grace. It now turns on himself whether or not he by his own act will accept the Christ who has adopted him.

3. To be washed by the Spirit means to be by the Holy Ghost renewed and sanctified to be members of Christ. The subject is created anew, *i. e.*, he is put into the life-

Q. 70.

communion of love with God in Christ. To the renewal of baptism we also can apply the term *objective*. He is born into a new kingdom.

4. A person adopted into the kingdom by Baptism is, by virtue of that grace, an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ. If through the perverseness of sin he fail of realizing in his history the end of such great grace, that does not turn the inheritance into untruth or folly.

5. Adopted into the kingdom, the subject is sanctified, *i. e.*, by the Holy Ghost he is on the one hand separated from the world of sin and on the other set apart, consecrated to the service of the kingdom. He is set apart to the position, office and work of a member of Christ.

6. The last clauses express the moral and spiritual end of the Sacrament. The purpose is twofold, one negative and the other positive. The language adopted from Romans 6, is very strong: "We may more and more die into sin." Baptism in principle sunders my connection with the fallen world. Therefore I am to be in relation to sin as though I were not, *i. e.*, as if dead.

The other purpose is positive that we may "lead holy and unblamable lives." By Baptism I am set apart to be a member of Christ to the end that I may lead a holy life, a life in will, in purpose, in thought, in all my outward conduct, consecrated, wholly consecrated, to Jesus Christ.

Q. 71.

This Question asks for the evidence and proof of the exposition given in the previous Answer. Where has Christ taught this? "In the institution of Baptism." Mark 16: 16. If we take the words in the sense in which they were spoken, in which they were understood by the Apostles, in the sense in which Baptism is everywhere in the New Testament set forth, they are the adequate evidence. Baptism is the divine transaction by which the subject is joined to the triune Name. God and God's name are in one respect identical. If we distinguish the two things, the term "God" denotes the divine being in Himself, not revealed, whilst "Name" denotes the divine being led forth into the field of vision, confronting us as manifested in His kingdom, founded in the trinity. Rom. 5:4, 5. The

Q. 71.

Catechism quotes two other passages, Titus 3:5, and Acts 22:16. To these may be added 1 Peter 3:21. The figure of Peter is taken from the deluge; as by water Noah in the ark was saved, so Baptism now saves us by the resurrection of Christ.

Q. 72.

The Catechism distinguishes definitely between *water* and *baptism*, between washing with water and the observance of baptism. Hence this Question. The Answer is an unconditional negative, "*No.*" The outward washing with water by itself is not Baptism. Only the blood of Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sin.

1. Two things must be considered. First, that the blood and Spirit of Christ alone take away sin. But by this formula, "blood and Spirit," the Catechism means the internal spiritual virtue of Baptism, not Christ disjoined from His ordinance. Second, what God has joined together cannot be put asunder. Washing with water does not regenerate and save us. On the other hand, we do not become members of Christ in the New Testament sense by virtue of His death and the agency of the Holy Spirit divorced from the Sacrament. Here then two things are to be affirmed, viz: the divine and the human factor. Faith is an indispensable requisite. Baptism without it cannot issue in salvation. So Baptism is an indispensable requisite, *i. e.* the blood and Spirit of Christ work effectually (in the objective sense) in and through holy Baptism. That is the divinely established order.

Remarks: 1. Do not in experience judge of the virtue of Baptism from the abuse of it. Perhaps the majority of baptized infants abuse baptismal grace, as Esau disposed of his birthright. Of Baptism we must judge by the word of God. That is first. Then judge of it from experience in cases where the response of men to the obligation of Baptism corresponds to God's will.

We have to deal here with some extraordinary cases. Does it follow that a man who repents and believes in Christ, but is called hence before he can be baptized, will perish? The Catechism does not teach such a doctrine.

Q. 72.

It is the neglect and refusal that condemns, not the unavoidable omission.

Again, are unbaptized infants or adults necessarily lost? Augustine taught so, and the Roman Church still teaches that doctrine; though it holds of unbaptized infants only that they suffer by the privation of the higher good. The Reformed Church does not teach, nor does it follow from the lack of Baptism in the case of infants, that they are excluded from the kingdom of God.

2. This reasoning applies to the Word as it does to the Sacraments. God's Word is the power and wisdom of God to salvation. It is the appointed and indispensable means whereby truth and grace come to men. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But it does not follow logically that all who have not heard and do not hear the Word will, as a necessary consequence, be excluded.

3. Those only are excluded from the kingdom of heaven who do not become members of Christ. In order to be a member of Christ two things are requisite; the agency of the Holy Spirit, the divine work, and the power of living faith, the human act. For no man can regenerate himself and become personally possessor of the new life and of forgiveness apart from the responsive act of his own will.

Q. 73.

This Question takes up Titus 3: 5, where baptism is spoken of as the "bath of regeneration," and Acts 22: 16, where it is called "the washing away of sins." If outward washing does not regenerate nor take away sins, why does the Holy Spirit predicate regeneration and purification of baptism? In Question 72 it is the outward washing of which spiritual virtue is denied, *i. e.*, the external divorced from the internal transaction. In 73 it is Baptism of which spiritual virtue is affirmed. Outward washing with water does not wash away sins. The removal of sins turns on the blood and spirit of Christ.

Why then does the Holy Ghost, as in Titus 3: 5, call baptism the bath of regeneration? Answer 73 seeks to

solve this seeming lack of consistency between Scripture and Answer 72.

The Answer consists of two parts. The first reasserts the latter half of Answer 69, more fully explained by 70. The second part endeavors to add to the force of this truth. The first part is introduced by the formula, "not only." This implies an affirmation and a negation. The affirmation is that the antecedent in this Answer is true; the negation implies that this truth is not the whole truth. The formula with which the second part is introduced, viz: "but much more," implies a negation and an affirmation. The negation is that the truth of the antecedent is not the whole truth; the positive is that the climax of the statement of truth is given in the consequent.

1. The antecedent in substance repeats the latter half of Answer 69. It reasserts the symbolical significance of Baptism; it reasserts the analogy between outward bodily washing and inward spiritual cleaning. The outward is by water, the inward by the blood and Spirit of Christ. The antecedent is equivalent to the explanations of the title *sign*, as given in 66. As a sign the Sacraments more fully than the word of the gospel declare to us the *promise*. The gospel teaches the promise in words. Baptism teaches the Promise in an actual transaction in which the individual subject is a participant.

2. The consequent is intended to be the climax of statement as to the inward virtue of Baptism. The force of this final statement turns on the expression, "that by this divine pledge and token He may assure us, that we are as really washed from our sins spiritually, as our bodies are washed with water." The Catechism abides by the idea that the seal certifies, makes forgiveness sure, so that the subject of Baptism may without doubt know that from his sins he is really washed spiritually; the inward washing being as certain for him as the outward. The subjective element prevails in this climax. The spiritual good *accompanies* the outward transaction; the outward is the pledge, the token, that the inward is present.

It follows from this teaching, if no more, that the subject of Baptism is by the blood and Spirit of Christ adopted into the covenant, and thus freed from the condemnation resting upon him in consequence of sin. Positively con-

Q. 73.

sidered, baptism sets its subjects apart or sanctifies them to be members of Christ, as its inward force is expressed in Answer 70.

INFANT BAPTISM.

Q. 74.

The Answer says unconditionally, *yes*. There are two things chiefly taught by the Answer. The first is the ground on which the affirmation that infants are to be baptized rests. The other is the virtue of infant baptism, or the spiritual good which, through baptism, comes to the infant. There is a supplementary thought connecting infant baptism with infant circumcision.

1. The ground on which infant baptism rests is twofold. First, the infant children of Christian parents belong to the covenant of God and are His possession. Second, that the blessing of grace, viz: redemption from sin and the Holy Ghost, are promised to infants as certainly as to their parents.

2. As to its genius, the covenant of God with man is but one; the import of the Abrahamic covenant runs through the entire history of its development. That covenant embraced the children of Abraham, also the children of every family descending from Abraham; hence the sign of circumcision for adults and infants. Infants eight days' old were to be circumcised. God in the economy of grace does not deal with individuals as individuals only. He deals with the family. The unit of the race is not Adam, but Adam and Eve constituting one flesh.

The covenant in principle is the same, both under the old and new dispensation. The difference between the old and new covenant is not one that narrows but enlarges it. Under the old, male infants were to be circumcised, and male members of the family had rights and privileges from which women were excluded. Under the new, female infants as well as male infants become members of the kingdom by the same ordinance. Women and men are admitted alike to the holy communion. A construction of the covenant that excludes infants from it, on the ground that they do not believe, contradicts the genius of the covenant even as it stood under the old dispensation.

3. The other ground is that redemption and the Holy

Q. 74.

Ghost are by the Word of God secured to little children no less than their parents. Infants are conceived and born in sin. Ps. 51. Without redemption from sin they cannot be saved; without regeneration by the Holy Ghost they cannot have the new life. God does not draw the line on the score of age between man and man. The kingdom of God designs its spiritual blessings for all who need them. Therefore, on the ground of the one atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross, made for the whole human race, these fundamental blessings, viz: the quickening of the new life by the Holy Ghost and deliverance from the consequences of the fall, are promised to children, as well as to parents.

4. Hence this follows: By baptism infants are to be "engrafted into the Christian Church." Baptism, like circumcision, is regarded as the sign of the covenant. But chief stress is laid on its inner virtue. The Catechism (following the example of Paul) uses the image of engrafting. Infants, like a twig taken from the wild olive tree, is inserted into the new stock, Jesus Christ, the Vine, in whom all living branches grow and bear fruit.

5. Baptism draws the line of difference between the child of believers and the child of unbelievers. We may call the line outward if we fix attention on the outwardness of the baptismal transaction. Really, however, the line of difference is inward and spiritual.

6. The Catechism concludes the Answer by drawing the parallel between circumcision and baptism, maintaining that baptism in the kingdom of God founded by Christ, takes the place of circumcision.

Remark. The faith of the parent is necessary to the baptism of an infant. Either that or the faith of some other suitable person who will stand as sponsor, assuming the spiritual responsibility which Baptism imposes. For infant baptism by its very nature anticipates careful spiritual education and culture.

OF THE HOLY SUPPER OF THE LORD.

Q. 75.

The structure of the Question is ruled by the doctrine of the Sacraments. The Supper is a sign and a seal. The thing signified and sealed is that I partake of the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross. How is this truth, this

reality, signified and sealed? The Answer is given in three main parts. The first is introductory and rests on the general conception of the Sacraments. The second affirms the commemorative force of the Supper, its force touching the atoning sacrifice for me. The third enforces the communion between Christ and the communicant. Christ by his body and blood nourishes my soul.

1. Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of the broken bread and drink of the cup "and has joined there with these promises." The external and internal are conjoined on the basis of the principle announced first by Augustine: "*Ad elementum verbum accedit et sacramentum fit.*" The word comes to the elements and the sacrament is constituted.

The Catechism says, "this broken bread and this cup." By these forms of expression it designates the sacred bread and the sacred cup; in other words, the bread and wine set apart for the Lord's Supper. Distinguished thus, this cup, this bread, from all bread and wine employed for common use, it is the conjunction by the Spirit of the truth of the word, the truth expressed and communicated by the word, with bread and wine, that makes the institution called the Lord's Supper.

2. It follows then that consecrated bread and wine are not the Lord's Supper, not bread and wine disjoined from the body and blood of Christ. Also that the elements on the altar before and after the communion are not the Supper. The Supper is a transaction which includes the celebrator and the communicant. Hence follows the emphasis which the Reformers lay on the use.

3. The Sacrament is commemorative; not that we commemorate, though there is truth in the expression, "we do this in remembrance." But the truth here taught is that His body was offered and His blood shed for me as certainly as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken me.

4. The assurance that Christ offered Himself for me is given by this transaction. The Catechism emphasizes the breaking of the bread; not that I break it, but it is broken for me. Not that I take the cup, but that the cup is given to me. It is the objective side of the transaction which is especially emphasized. Words can only in general terms teach that Christ died for sinners; only in general terms

Q. 75.

can it assure us that His death is undoubted and real. Words of Scripture do not indicate the person to whom the truth of the word applies. Words cannot say to *John* or *Peter*, "Christ died for thee." Of course, in this illustration, John and Peter stand for all individual believers. But in the sacramental transaction Christ by His ministry certifies to every individual who takes the bread and wine, that for him, as John or James or Mary, the atoning sacrifice was made. In this sense the Lord's Supper is commemorative, not outwardly only, but by a transaction which has inward force.

The chief signification of the Lord's Supper is affirmed in the last part of this Answer. Christ Himself feeds and nourishes. Observe the careful and emphatic construction; not only "He," but "He Himself." The nourishment is not a divine influence. The nourishment is in and by the human nature of Christ. By "crucified body" and "shed blood" is designated the Mediator on the cross. But the meaning cannot be limited to the cross. The humanity whereby I am nourished is the crucified Christ ascended and glorified. It is the perfected humanity in and by which only vital fellowship with God is begun, continued and perfected.

5. Such nourishment of the soul by the crucified God-man in heaven is as certain as I taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord. The eating and drinking by me, which means, on the reverse side, the communication to me of the consecrated bread and cup, is the certain token of my nourishment by the body and blood of Christ. The spiritual nourishment is as certain as the natural nourishment.

Q. 76.

The Answer is given in two parts, corresponding to the twofold idea of the Supper.

The one is that I in the Supper share the virtue of the atoning sacrifice; in eating the Supper I embrace the death of Christ; by embracing His death I obtain forgiveness of sins and life eternal.

The other general truth is communion with Christ. The Catechism aims to expound the meaning of the words in Question 75: "With His crucified body and shed blood He Himself feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life."

The gist of this second part of the Answer may be expressed in these selected words: "to be so united to His sacred body that we are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones." The teaching here presumes what the Catechism in different places has set forth, *e. g.*, in 32, "that I am a member of Christ."

1. This Answer uses the formula of 73, "not only," "but also." With a believing heart I embrace the death of Christ as real in the observance of the Lord's Supper. In the act of eating the Lord's Supper in faith I embrace the sacrifice on the cross, and appropriate its redeeming virtue to myself, thereby obtaining forgiveness and life. I have a renewed certification of the truth that in Christ I am free from condemnation. In the act of eating the Supper the new life in Christ is nourished and grows. This twofold virtue is objective. Grace is active towards me and in me by the force of the Sacrament itself. I am to be receptive. I am active in faith in that I appropriate Christ as forgiveness and life eternal.

2. The Catechism reaches the climax of its exposition in the second part, the aim being to set forth the marrow of the truth of Answer 75 expressed by the words: "with His crucified body and shed blood He Himself feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life." We may gather up the meaning of the Catechism into words already given, *viz*: "by eating the Supper we are more and more united to the sacred body of Christ." Adopting the words of Paul in Ephesians 4, the Catechism denotes this closer union by saying, "that we are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones." This language is designed to intensify and make real the force of the words, "sacred body." In each observance of the Supper we are as it were knit to the Son of Man. The union between Him and us, His members, is as close as the union of bone to bones, and of flesh to flesh in the natural body.

3. This union and nourishment depends on the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, the pentecostal Gift, dwells in Christ, in the incarnate Son glorified. The Spirit also dwells in us His living members. The oneness between Christ, the Head, and us, His members, is begotten by His Holy Spirit; and by the Spirit in the Supper the life union is maintained and nourished. The crucified God-man glorified is

Q. 76.

the food which by the Holy Spirit is imparted to believing communicants.

4. This union and communion is not affected by the fact that we are on earth and Christ in heaven. Heaven means the glorified order of the spiritual world. Earth here means the Church militant, subject to the conditions of this world. The union of God and man in the person of Christ, is the union of the two worlds. He, by His resurrection and glorification, has superseded and transcended the opposition and contradiction otherwise prevalent between God and man, between the heavenly and the earthly.

5. The Answer concludes by the use of a simile. Christ and His people, viewed as one body, is compared with man as an individual. My soul animates and inhabits all the members of my body simultaneously; so the Holy Spirit, being in Christ and in us, governs all the members of Christ's kingdom. The fellowship of Christ, by the Spirit, active toward us and in us, is as real, as intimate, as vital, also as inscrutable, as the union of the soul and the natural body.

Q. 77.

The Question does not inquire after the authority for teaching the symbolical import of the Supper, but for the authority on which rests the mystical truth that Christ feeds and nourishes believers with His body and blood. The Answer quotes 1 Cor. 12: 23-26. The Reformed Church uses the form of words given by Paul. If I mistake not, this rule prevails in all Reformed and Presbyterian churches. The Lutheran Church bases its formula on the gospels. Its formula follows the words of the institution as given by Luke, but not exclusively.

1. Observe that in the formula "take, eat," both verbs are in the imperative mood. Their force might be expressed thus, "take ye, eat ye."

2. Biblical criticism has settled that the word "broken," 1 Cor. 11: 24, is not genuine. The words are, "take, eat, this is my body, which is for you." This is far-reaching. Much of the controversy in the sixteenth century turned on the word "broken."

3. The words of Paul emphasize the commemoration, but also the communion. The commemoration appears in

Q. 77.

these words, "this do in remembrance of me." The communion is the fact that we eat the bread and drink of the cup, the two things being inseparately conjoined. The words of the institution are supported by 1 Cor. 10: 16, 17, where *communion* is especially emphasized.

Q. 78.

This Question regards the wide difference between the evangelical truth of the Lord's Supper, and the Roman theory, which teaches transubstantiation. The Answer is the categorical "*No.*" In one view this denial is the whole of the Answer. It means that the bread by consecration is not as to its substance changed into the body of Christ. In this respect there is no difference between the two main branches of the Protestant Church. Both classes of the Reformers stood with equal emphasis opposed to the Roman theory.

1. The Answer institutes a comparison between the Lord's Supper and Baptism. In Baptism the natural element as natural, undergoes no change. In the sacramental transaction water obtains a sacred relation to the cleansing virtue of Christ, but the water is not changed into the blood; hence it follows also that external washing with water is not itself the spiritual cleansing of the soul. But the water and the washing with the water constitute, according to the Catechism, a twofold force, a token and an assurance. The external indicates and at the same time is the certification of the internal, spiritual virtue.

2. So in the Lord's Supper the bread and wine are "sacred," because set apart and by the Holy Spirit connected with Christ; but natural bread continues to be natural bread, and wine to be natural wine.

3. The purpose of this Answer is merely to affirm these truths by way of antithesis to the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation.

4. Agreeably to the nature and usage of Sacraments "the sacred bread" is called the body of Christ. What is the nature of the Sacrament? By the institution two things, one natural the other supernatural, one visible and earthly the other invisible and heavenly, are conjoined and become one. Hence of the unity we may predicate either of the constituents. Of the Sacrament we may predicate

Q. 78.

the body of Christ; of the Sacrament we may predicate natural bread. What is meant by "usage?" It may be expressed by the phrase, "*usus loquendi*." It is the mode of speech belonging to Sacraments. According to approved scriptural and theological speech, we predicate of the one spiritual unity either bread or the body.

Remark: The Reformed and Lutherans of the sixteenth century are on these points of one mind. The difference between the Reformed Confessions and the Book of Concord relates chiefly to the manner of the presence. The Reformed maintain a real presence, but by the agency of the Holy Spirit. The Lutheran Church denies the term "consubstantiation;" it also denies local presence. The approved formula is "*in, cum et sub,*" i. e., the real body of Christ is present, *in, with and under* the consecrated bread.

Q. 79.

Question 79 corresponds to Question 73; and the two Answers are constructed on the same general principle. The opening sentence of Answer 73 differs from that of 79 only in saying "God speaks" instead of "Christ speaks." The body of the Answer consists of two parts, the antecedent and the consequent, the two being connected by the formula, "Not only . . . but much more." "Not only" is, first, affirmative, then negative, it means that the antecedent teaches the truth, but not the whole truth. The second member of the formula, "but much more," means that the antecedent does not contain the whole truth, but that the complementary truth is taught by the consequent.

1. Sacramental eating is compared to natural eating. Natural bread nourishes temporal life; so does spiritual food nourish the soul unto life eternal. The spiritual food is Christ's crucified body and shed blood. *Cf.* the latter half of Answer 75. Christ's glorified humanity is the true meat and drink unto immortality. This is part of the truth taught by Christ in the Lord's Supper, but only a part.

2. According to the Catechism, the whole truth is *much more*. Much more than what? Than the spiritual fact that by the crucified body and shed blood of Christ our souls are nourished unto eternal life. What then is the truth? Wherein consists that which, by the formula "much more," is made emphatic? According to the Catechism the Answer

is expressed by the use of the words: "sign" and "pledge." What is a pledge? An external real thing, event or transaction, certifying the presence and reality of an unseen heavenly virtue. So much at least is warranted by the words of the Catechism.

3. What are the contents of the "pledge?" It is this: Of Christ's true body and blood believers, in observing the Lord's Supper, are as really partakers as by the mouth of the body they receive the bread and wine. I cannot withhold the expression of my judgment that the climax is not fully reached. There is a climax. This Answer goes beyond Answers 75 and 76, but rather in degree than in substance, and under the same aspect under which sacramental truth has before been stated. Let us briefly compare Answer 79 with 75 and 76.

In 75 observe that the words, "Christ Himself feeds and nourishes my soul," emphasize Christ's action, and therefore are objective. It is Christ who nourishes me. In 79 we have the opposite phase of truth; the believer's activity is emphasized. We receive by the mouth of the body; thus we are really partakers of His true body. Again, 75 speaks of the "crucified body and shed blood" while 79 says "true body and blood," leaving room for and implying the glorification of Christ's humanity. The words of 76, "we are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones," are fully as strong as those of 79, "partakers of His true body and blood."

The chief thing whereby the climax differs from 75 and 76 is by the force of the word "pledge." The Sacramental transaction assures us not only that we are flesh of His flesh, but that of the flesh of Christ we are renewedly partakers. By this renewed participation the new life is by the Spirit invigorated, developed and advanced, so that believers become equal to the resurrection of the dead and fitted for everlasting glory.

4. One important point is now made emphatic. If we are members of Christ, if the humanity of Christ nourishes us, then we have the assurance that the "sufferings and obedience" of Christ are our own. What sufferings? All the sufferings endured by Him from His birth to His death, including especially the agony in the garden and the horrible passion on the Cross. What obedience? The positive righteousness of Christ, accomplished by doing the will of His Father under the law. In what sense are these sufferings and this obedience our own? "Our own as

Q. 79.

certainly as if we had ourselves suffered and done all in our own persons." Here is a statement of our interest in Christ's atoning virtue which is of extraordinary force.

Q. 80.

The Answer to this Question is the article of declaration of war against the Roman church. In the sixteenth century this Answer provoked political and ecclesiastical hostility and extraordinary persecution from Roman powers.

The Council of Trent was in session when the Catechism was in process of formation. All its decrees are given in the form of condemnation: if any one does not thus and so let him be anathema. This fact provoked the introduction of Article 80. The Catechism, as prepared by Ursinus and adopted by the Synod of the Palatinate, January, 1563, ended with the words: "worshipped in them." It did not contain the last sentence of Answer 80, as it now stands. The Catechism had already gone to press, when the anathemas of the Council of Trent excited the Elector Frederick III., and he stopped the press and inserted the words: "And thus the mass at bottom is nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and passion of Jesus Christ." Many copies were struck off containing the Answer in this form. The continued anathemas of the Council provoked the Elector still more, and he stopped the press a second time to add the words, "and an accursed idolatry." This acme of offense caused the heirs of Frederick the loss of his dominions.

The edition of the Catechism, 1563, therefore has Answer 80 in three forms. These facts were not certainly known to modern history until 1863, when Dr. Schaff made special inquiry into the history of Answer 80, and was so fortunate as to find a copy of the *editio princeps*.

1. The Answer consists of two parts. The first is a clear, full statement of the Reformed doctrine, fully equal to, if not better than, the preceding Answer, because more succinct and direct. As to substance, however, it is the same. I specify only a few points: 1. that the Lord's Supper testi-

Q. 80.

fies full forgiveness of all sin, original and actual; 2. that by the Holy Spirit we are engrafted into Christ and are members of His body; 3. that Christ with His true body is in heaven, and 'there we worship Him; we do not worship Him in the sacramental bread.

2. The second part presents succinctly the main features of the Roman doctrine.

1. The Roman doctrine denies that the living and the dead have forgiveness through the sufferings of Christ only. The sufferings which He endured on the cross avail for us when Christ is offered for us by the priest on the altar. Day by day it is necessary, if believers would have peace, that the one sacrifice on the cross be repeated on the altar.

2. This sacrifice on the altar avails for the living and the dead. The punishments of the dead in purgatory are mitigated, and their souls are released by the virtue of the offering of Christ in the mass.

3. The Roman Church teaches that Christ is bodily present under the form of bread and wine. That means that bread has the size, shape, taste and color of bread, but is not bread, only the form of it. So of the wine. Therefore, in the host Christ is to be worshipped. The host is adored, for it is the real presence of Christ. For these reasons the Catechism pronounces the mass to be a denial of Christ's one sacrifice, and the adoration of the host to be an accursed idolatry.

Q. 81.

The Answer consists of two parts. The first teaches the required qualifications of a worthy communicant. The second part rejects the unworthy.

1. Those are to come to the Lord's Supper who are displeased with themselves for their sins. Sin itself is the evil which they must hate. It is not a consequence of sin, not the fear of the future world, but sin, as contrary to God, with which the Christian is to be at issue. I am displeased with myself not because I am a man, but, being a man, because I have wronged my manhood and wronged God by my sin.

2. Another qualification is personal faith. I trust in Christ, that my sins are forgiven. That means: 1, that the penalty is removed, Romans 8:1; 2, that sin is not the law of my life. It has no dominion over my will and

Q. 81.

conduct. My confidence that my sins are pardoned rests on the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Christ has fulfilled the law, has offered Himself a sacrifice for me and has overcome the kingdom of darkness by His resurrection. Therefore, as I accept Him, I am in Him released from sin.

3. This forgiveness includes the remaining depravity of my nature, here called "infirmity." Says the Catechism: "Their remaining depravity is covered." Romans 3: 25. God in Christ deals with me not according to my inherited depravity and moral infirmity, but deals with me as at peace with Him through faith in Christ.

4. The third qualification is the positive desire "to strengthen" my faith "and amend" my life. Fitness for the Holy Communion looks in two directions; on the one hand, toward the world of evil, and on the other toward the world of good. The deepest, strangest desire and purpose of my heart must be to become more firm in faith, and to be purer, more righteous, more holy in my daily conduct.

5. All others are unfit to come to the Supper. This includes the impenitent, such as have never from the heart turned to Christ, confessing sin and looking to Him for pardon, and hypocrites, members of the church who have the form of godliness without its power.

Q. 82.

Two things are named as determining disqualifications: "confession and life." "Confession" means the holding of opinions that contravene the fundamental articles of the Christian Creed, *e. g.*, in orthodox Protestant churches, the denial of the Deity or the humanity of Christ. "Life" relates to conduct, including will, desires and the whole tenor of a man's deportment. If in either way or through both he shows himself unfit, he is not to be admitted to the Holy Supper. The unfitness is expressed by the word "unbelieving," on the one hand, and by "ungodly" on the other. Either is sufficient to exclude a church member; the Answer is unconditional. Then follows the reason for the unconditional "No;" and the duty of the church in the premises.

Q. 82.

1. The reason is: "God's covenant is profaned," *i. e.*, its holy character is ignored and set aside. The ordinance which is the Holy of Holies of Christian cultus is reduced to the matter of a common meal.

2. When the Covenant is profaned, God's wrath is provoked. Against whom? The whole congregation. Why? Because the entire membership is, as one body, participating, through its officers, in this indifference and desecration. Instance in the Old Testament is Achan; in the New see 1 Cor. 5: 13.

3. The church is bound to exclude such persons. Matt. 18:15-18 gives the order of Christ. His authority is pronounced and direct. It is reasserted by the Apostle in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. Acts 5. How are such persons to be excluded? By the office of "the keys." The church is represented under the image of a temple, also of a walled city. The church is entered by the door or the gate, and the instrument which opens and closes it is called the key. From this image, common in Scripture, is derived the formula of the Catechism, "by the office of the keys." Matt. 16: 19.

How long are such persons to be excluded? Until they amend their life. The ethical side of the Christian is here brought into the foreground.

Q. 83.

The office of the keys is: 1. the preaching of the Gospel! 2. church discipline. In order to understand what the Catechism means by "Holy Gospel," compare Question 19. The teaching here is in full harmony with Answer 65. The Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the Holy Gospel. By these two things the kingdom of Heaven is opened to believers and shut against unbelievers.

Remark: The Gospel does not approach the world with the sentence of condemnation. All are under condemnation, but the Gospel is glad tidings. Hence to the wicked and ungodly, to all errorists, the Gospel comes in love and mercy. Condemnation ensues when truth is despised, and love trampled under foot. This is fundamental in preaching the Gospel to the wicked.

Q. 84.

The remaining two Questions of Part Second take up the consideration of the two keys. Each effects a twofold purpose. Each opens and each closes the gates of the kingdom. Observe in Question 84 the same order that we have in Answer 83.

1. How are the gates opened by the preaching of the Gospel? By a twofold act. The promise of the Gospel is "proclaimed" and declared in words that all may hear and understand. The promise is also "openly witnessed." Those who preach and teach in the name of Christ are living witnesses to the virtue of the promise. What is the promise? The forgiveness of sins. Here we have a repetition of the manner of the Reformation in expressing its apprehension of Christian truth. To express the undoubted certainty of the forgiveness of all sins, both branches of the Reformation lay stress on the *word* of God; and the certainty of that word they express by *promise*. The thing proclaimed and witnessed was that sins are freely forgiven. Who forgives? God. On what ground? Not on the ground of self-imposed works, but for the sake of Christ's merits.

2. The Catechism means that, from day to day as the Gospel is renewedly taught and testified to, the kingdom is opened.

3. The Kingdom is shut against whom? Unbelievers outside of or in the church. Also against hypocrites, those who, like Simon Magus, profess faith and are baptized from sinister motives. What does this shutting mean? "The wrath of God and eternal condemnation abide on them." John 3: 36. There is a twofold condemnation: 1. in consequence of the transgression of moral law, in one or all of the commandments of the decalogue; 2. in consequence of the rejection of the Gospel. Men say "No" to Truth and Righteousness and Love. They say "No" to the infinitude of Grace, and thereby incur divine displeasure, which is fatal. The sin of sins is not to believe in Jesus as the Christ.

4. Condemnation exists as long as they are not converted.

5. The Answer concludes with the solemn truth, that the witness of the gospel is prophetic. It is the expression of God's judgment. When the gospel declares this fundamental Christian truth: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," this declaration embodies the

Q. 84.

judgment of God ; that prevails in this life and in the life to come. Paul speaks of the preaching of the gospel as being a savor of life unto life, or a savor of death unto death.

Q. 85.

Here the order is reversed ; the kingdom is, first, shut by discipline, and afterwards opened. Why the reverse order? Because church discipline deals with church members, persons in the kingdom. Discipline touches them in its ultimate effect first, by exclusion ; then, afterwards, on the strength of repentance, discipline opens the gates. The Answer has these two divisions: 1. How by discipline the kingdom is shut. 2. How by discipline the kingdom is opened.

1. Who are subjects for discipline? Those who, bearing the Christian name, show themselves: 1. Unsound in doctrine, holding unchristian errors. 2. Unsound in life, having fallen into such sins as are incompatible with the Christian character.

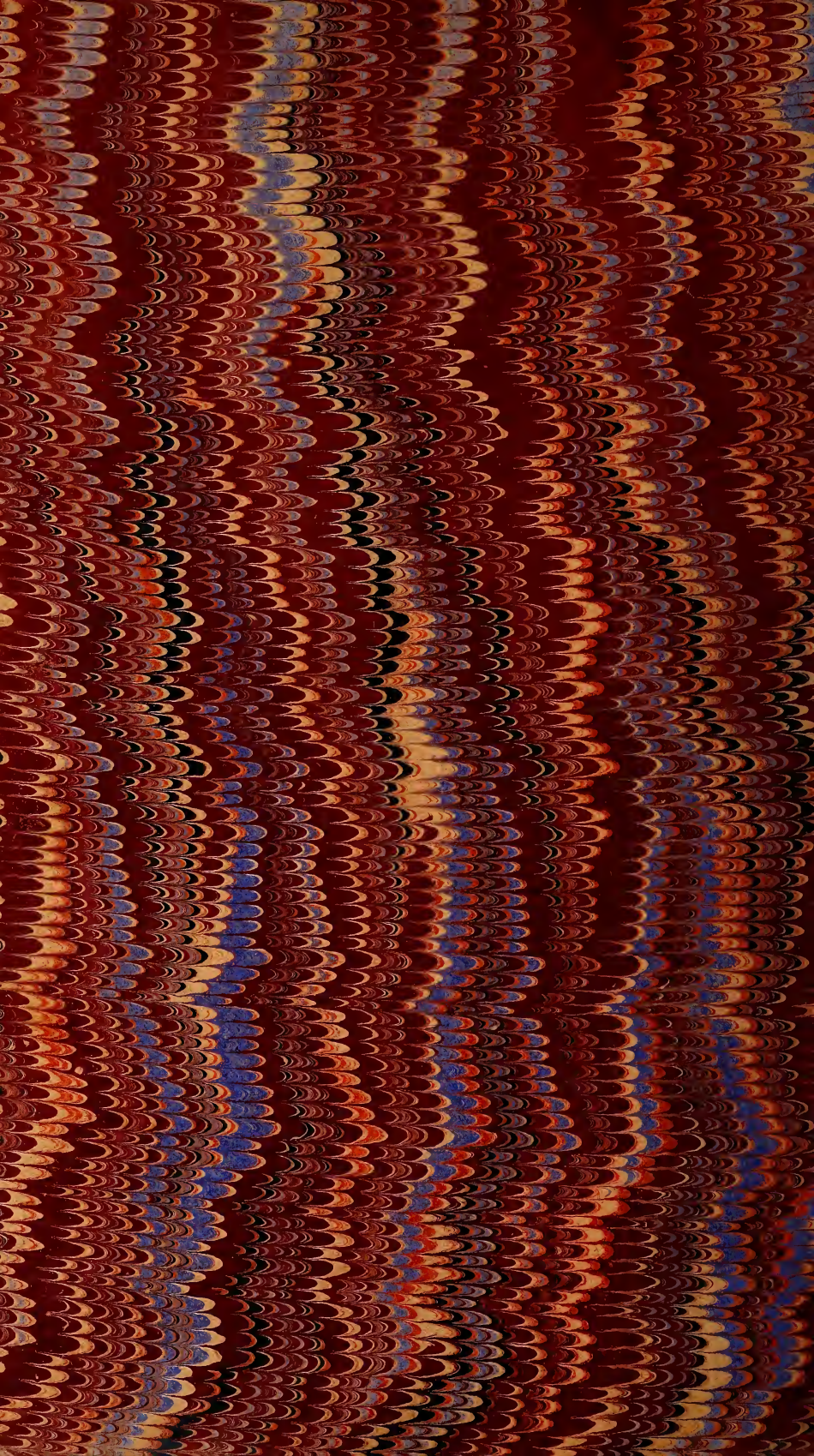
2. Such members are to have brotherly admonition from a Christian friend, or from a church officer, or from a pastor, or from two or more persons. Admonition is to be repeated in ordinary cases.

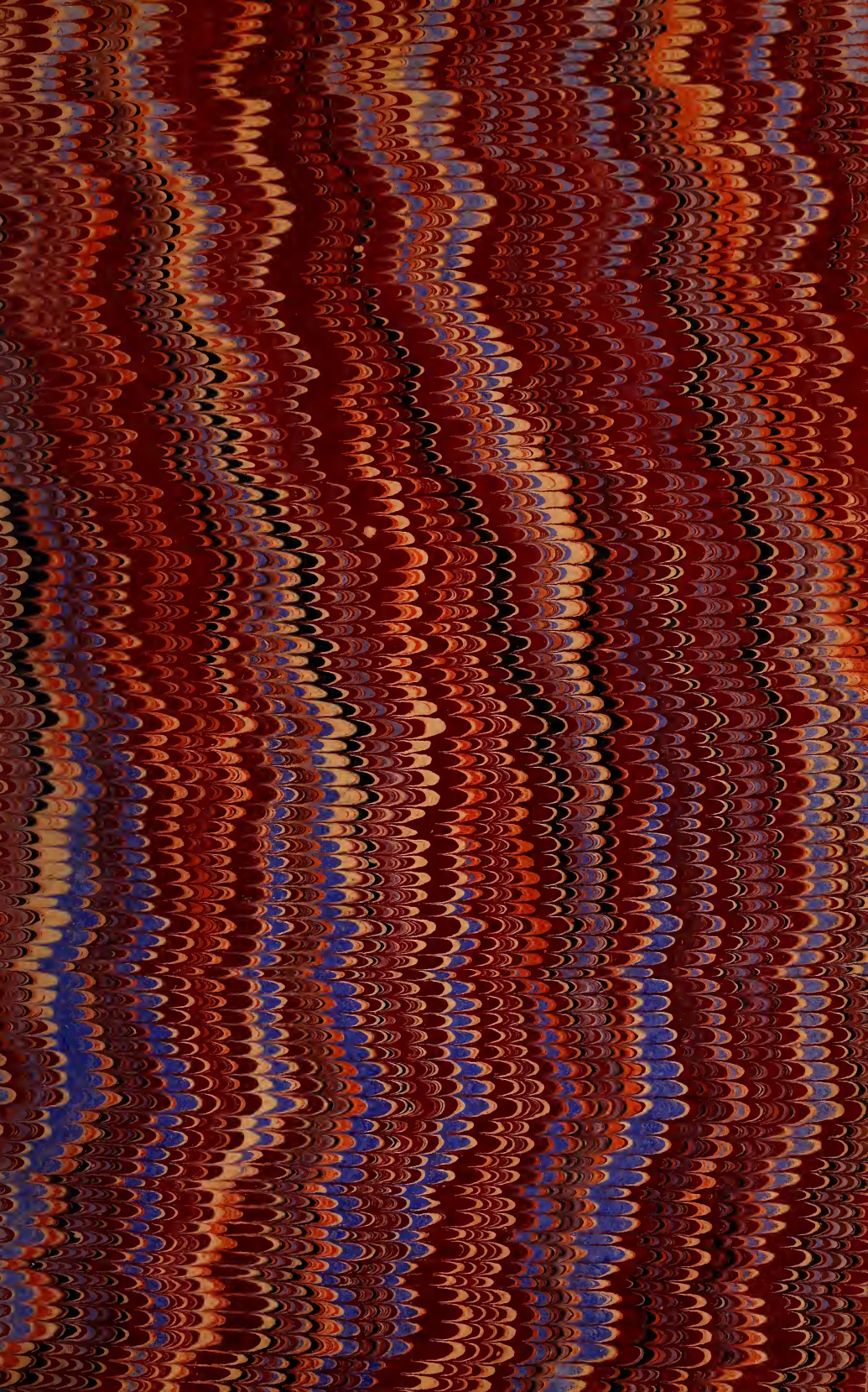
3. If admonition does not avail, then complaint must be made to the Church. According to the organization of the Reformed Church such complaint should be made to the spiritual council.

4. If the admonition of the spiritual council does not avail, then such persons are excluded from the Christian Church. They may be suspended from one communion, or more. If suspension does not effect the required amendment, excommunication must follow.

5. This act of exclusion is God's act.

6. Discipline opens the Kingdom to suspended or excommunicated persons, if they promise and show amendment. Their conduct must answer to their words.





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